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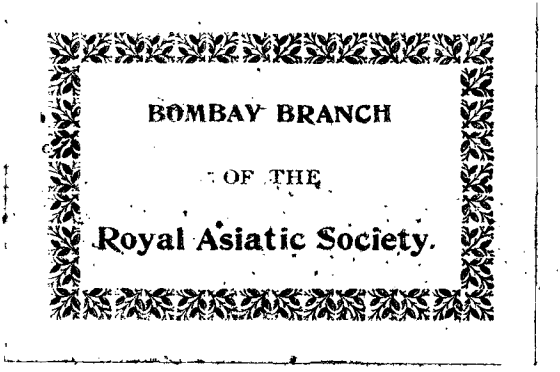

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FANATICISM.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

NATURAL HISTORY OF ENTHUSIASM.

—— αἱ μετὰ πάθους διαστροφαὶ
τῆς ψυχῆς χαλεπώτεραι.

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PREFACE.

STRICT propriety seldom allows an author to obtrude upon the public the circumstances that may have attended, and controlled his literary labours. Yet the rule may give way to special reasons; and in the present instance the reader is requested courteously to admit an exception.

More than twelve years ago the Author projected a work which should at one view exhibit the several principal forms of spurious or corrupted religion. But discouraged by the magnitude and difficulty of such a task, he after a while, yet not without much reluctance, abandoned the undertaking. Nevertheless the subject

continually pressed upon his mind. At length he selected a single portion of the general theme, and adventured—NATURAL HISTORY OF ENTHUSIASM.

Emboldened to proceed, the Author almost immediately entered upon the nearly connected and sequent subject which fills the present volume. Yet fearing lest, by an unskilful or unadvised treatment of certain arduous matters which it involves, he might create embarrassment where most he desired to do good, he laid aside his materials.

But in the interval, by extending his researches concerning the rise and progress of the fatal errors that have obscured our holy religion, the Author greatly enhanced his wish to achieve his first purpose. He therefore resumed FANATICISM; which is now offered to the candour of the Reader. He next proposes, in advancing towards the completion of his original design, to take in hand SUPERSTITION, and its attendant CREDULITY.

A natural transition leads from Superstition and Credulity to Spiritual Despotism. The principal perversions of Religion having thus been reviewed, it would be proper to describe that Corruption of Morals which, in different modes, has resulted from the overthrow of genuine piety. There would then only remain to be considered Scepticism, or Philosophic Irreligion; and the series will embrace all that the Author deems indispensable to the undertaking he has so long meditated.

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FANATICISM.

SECTION I.

MOTIVES OF THE WORK.

THE maladies of the mind are not to be healed any more than those of the body unless by a friendly hand. But through a singular infelicity it too often happens that these evils, deep as they are, and difficult of cure, fall under a treatment that is hostile and malign; or, what is worse, frivolous. Especially does this disadvantage attach to that peculiar class of mental disorders which, as they are more profound in their origin than any other, and more liable to extreme aggravation, demand, in whoever would relieve them, not only the requisite skill, but the very purest intentions.

Vitiated religious sentiments have too much connexion with the principles of our physical constitution to be in every case effectively amended by methods that are merely theological; and yet, drawing their strength as they do from great

truths with which the physiologist has ordinarily little or no personal acquaintance, and which perhaps he holds in contempt, he is likely to err, as well in theory as in practice, when he takes them in hand. How profound soever or exact may be his knowledge of human nature, whether as matter of science or as matter of observation, the subject, in these instances, lies beyond his range:—himself neither religious nor even superstitious, he has no sympathy with the deep movements of the soul in its relation to the Infinite and Invisible Being;—he has no clue therefore to the secret he is in search of. The misapprehensions of the frigid philosopher are vastly increased if it should happen that, in reference to religion, his feelings are petulant and acrimonious.—Poor preparation truly for a task of such peculiar difficulty to be at once ignorant in the chief article of the case, and hurried on by the motives that attend a caustic levity of temper!

It would indeed be difficult to furnish a satisfactory reason either for the asperity or for the levity with which persons of a certain class allow themselves to speak of grave perversions of the religious sentiment; for if such vices of the spirit be regarded as corruptions of the most momentous of all truths, then surely a due affection for our fellow-men, on the one hand, and a proper reverence towards Heaven on the other, alike demand from reasonable persons as

well tenderness as awe, in approaching a subject so fraught with fatal mischiefs. Or even if Religion be deemed by these sarcastic reprovers altogether an illusion, or an inveterate prejudice, infesting our luckless nature, not the more, even in that case, can rancour or levity become a wise and benevolent mind, seeing that these same powerful sentiments, whether true or false, do so deeply affect the welfare of the human family.

Or to look at the subject on another side, it may fairly be asked why the religious passions might not claim from supercilious wits a measure of that lenity (if not indulgence) which is readily afforded to vices of another sort.—If Pride, abhorrent as it is, and if Ambition, with both hands dyed in blood, and if the lust of wealth, making the weak its prey, and if sensual desires, devoid of pity, are all to be gently handled, and all in turn find patrons among Sages—why might not also Fanaticism? why might not Enthusiasm? why not Superstition? It would be hard to prove that the deluded religionist, even when virulent in an extreme degree, or when most absurd, is practically a more mischievous person than, for instance, the adulterous despoiler of domestic peace, or than the rapacious dealer in human souls and bodies. Let it be true that the Hypocrite is an odious being;—yes, but is not the Oppressor also detestable? And what has become of the philosophic impartiality of the Sage (self-styled)

who will spend his jovial hours at the table of the Cruel or the Debauched, while all he can bestow upon the victims of religious extravagance, is the bitterness of his contempt? There is a manifest inconsistency here of which surely those should be able to give a good account who, themselves, are far too wise than to be religious!

We leave this difficulty in the hands of the parties it may concern, and proceed to say that emotions altogether strange to frigid and sardonic tempers must have come within the experience of whoever would truly comprehend the malady of the fanatic or the enthusiast; and much more so, if he is attempting to restore the disordered spirit to soundness of health. Mere intellectualists, as well as men of pleasure, know just so much of human nature as their own frivolous sentiments may serve to give them a sense of: all that lies deeper than these slender feelings, or that stretches beyond this limited range, is to them a riddle and a mockery. But it may happen that a mind natively sound, and one now governed by the firmest principles, has, in an early stage, or in some short era of its course, so far yielded to the influence of irregular or vehement sentiments as to give it ever after a sympathy, even with the most extreme cases of the same order; so that, by the combined aid of personal experience and observation, the profound abyss wherein

exorbitant religious ideas take their course may successfully be explored;—nor merely explored, but its fearful contents brought forth and described, and this too in the spirit of *humanity*, or with the feeling of one who, far from affecting to look down as from a pinnacle upon the follies of his fellow-men, speaks in kindness of their errors, as being himself liable to every infirmity that besets the human heart and understanding.

Never in fact, have we more urgent need of a settled principle of philanthropy than when we set foot upon the ground of religious delusion. Nowhere, so much as there, is it necessary to be resolute in our good-will to man, and fixt in our respect for him too, even while the strictness of important principles is not at all relaxed. Far more easy is it to be contemptuously bland, than kind and firm on occasions of this sort. We have only to abandon our concern for serious truths, and then may be indulgent to the worst enormities.—But this were a cruel charity, and a farce too; and we must seek a much surer foundation for that love which is to be the consort of knowledge.

A personal consciousness of the readiness with which even the most egregious or dangerous perversions of feeling at first recommend themselves to the human mind, and soon gain sovereign control over it, is needed to place us in the position we ought to occupy whenever

such evils are to be made the subject of animadversion. And if, with the light of Christianity full around us, and with the advantages of general intelligence on our side, we yet cannot boast of having enjoyed an entire exemption from false or culpable religious emotions, what sentiment but pity should be harboured when we come to think of those who, born beneath a malignant star, have walked by no other light than the lurid glare of portentous superstitions?—A check must even be put to those strong and involuntary emotions of indignation with which we contemplate the hateful course of the spiritual despot and persecutor.—Outlaw of humanity, and offspring, as he seems, of infernals, he may command also a measure of indulgence as the child of some false system which, by a slow accumulation of noxious qualities, has grown to be far more malign than its authors would have made it. Besides; there may revolve within the abyss of the human heart (as history compels us to admit) a world of wonderous inconsistencies; and especially so when religious infatuations come in to trouble it. How often has there been seen upon the stage of human affairs beings—must we call them men? who, with hands sodden in blood—blood of their brethren, have challenged to themselves, and on no slender grounds, the praise of a species of virtue and greatness of soul!

The very same spirit of kindness which should rule us in the performance of a task such as the one now in hand, must also furnish the necessary motive for the arduous undertaking. Is it as matter of curious description only, or of entertainment, or even with the more worthy, though secondary purpose of philosophical inquiry, that we are to pass over the ground of religious extravagance? Any such intention would be found to lack impulse enough for the labour. There are however at hand motives of an incomparably higher order, and of far greater force, and these (or some of them at least) have a peculiar urgency in reference to the present moment. To these motives too much importance cannot be attributed; and it will be well that we should here distinctly bring them to view.

All devout minds are now intent upon the hope of the overthrow of old superstitions, and of the universal spread of the Gospel. But the spread of the Gospel, as we are warranted to believe, implies and demands its clear separation from all those false sentiments and exaggerated or mischievous modes of feeling which heretofore, and so often, have embarrassed its course. In a word Christianity must free itself from all entanglement with malignant or exorbitant passions, if it would break over its present boundaries. Is the world to be converted—are the nations to be brought home to God?

Yes ; — but this supposes that the Christian body should awake from every illusion, and rid itself of every disgrace.

True indeed it is, and lamentable, that the families of man have remained age after age the victims of error: yet this has not happened because there has not been extant in every age, somewhere, a repository of truth, and an INSTRUMENT, or means of instruction. If even now superstition and impiety share between them the empire of almost all the world, it is not because nothing better comes within the reach of the human mind, or because nothing more benign is presented to its choice. No—for absolute Truth, Truth from heaven, has long sojourned on earth, and is to be conversed with. Why then do the people still sit in darkness ? — The question may painfully perplex us, yet should never be dismissed. Rather a genuine and intelligent compassion for our fellow-men will lead us to prosecute with intense zeal any inquiry which may issue in the purification of the means of salvation confided to our care. If the Gospel does not (as we might have expected, and must always desire) prevail and run from land to land—the anxious question recurs — what arrests its progress ?

Besides employing ourselves then in all eligible modes for propagating the faith, every one competent to the task, should institute

a scrutiny, at home and abroad, in quest as well of open hinderances to the progress of the Gospel, as of the more latent or obscure causes of obstruction. The great work in an age of Missions, should it be anything else than the re-inauguration of Christianity among ourselves? If religion—religion we mean, not as found on parchments, or in creeds, but in the bosoms of men, were indeed what once it was, it would doubtless spread, as once it did, from heart to heart, and from city to city, and from shore to shore. The special reason therefore — or the URGENT REASON, why we should now dismiss from our own bosoms every taint of superstition, and every residue of unbelief, as well as whatever is fanatical, factious, or uncharitable, is this—that the world—even the deluded millions of our brethren, may at length receive the blessings of the Gospel.

Although we were looking no further than to the personal welfare of individuals, it would always seem in the highest degree desirable that whoever believes the Gospel should cast off infirmities of judgment—preposterous suppositions—idle and debilitating fears, and especially should become free from the taint of malign sentiments. But after we have so thought of the *individual*, must we not give a renewed attention to the influence he may exert over others? No one "liveth to himself."—An efficacy, vital or mortal, emanates from the person of every professor of

the Gospel.—Every man calling himself (in a special sense) a Christian, either saves or destroys those around him:—Such is the rule of the dispensation under which we have to act. It pleases not the Divine Power (very rare cases excepted) to operate independently of that living and rational agency to which even the scheme of human redemption was made to conform itself. The Saviour of men "became flesh, and dwelt among us," because no violence could be done, even on the most urgent and singular of all occasions, to the established principles of the moral system.—The harmony of the intellectual world, in the constitution of which the Divine Wisdom is so signally displayed, must not be disturbed, notwithstanding that the Eternal Majesty himself was coming to the rescue of the lost; and in this illustrious instance we have a proof, applicable to every imaginable case, and always sufficient to convince us—That the saving mercy of God to man moves only along the line of rational and moral agency;—that if a sinner is to be "converted from the error of his way," it must be by the word or personal influence of one like himself. Was it not (other purposes being granted) to give sanction to this very mode of procedure, that He who "was rich" in the fulness of divine perfections, "became poor," that we, through the poverty of his human nature, "might be made rich?" Vain supposition then that God,

who would not at first save the world at the cost, or to the damage of the settled maxims of his government, shall in after instances waive them ;or put contempt in private cases upon that to which he attributed the highest importance on the most notable of all occasions!

Christianity, such as it actually exists in the bosoms of those who entertain it, is the Instrument of God's mercy to the world:—and the Effect in every age will be as is the Instrument. In these times we have not quite lost sight of this great principle; much less do we deny it:—and yet every day we give more attention to other truths, than to this. We honour the capital doctrine of the agency of the Spirit of Grace in the conversion of men; and then we turn to proximate and visible means, and pay due regard to all the ordinary instruments of instruction. And thus having rendered homage in just proportion, to the Divine Power and sovereignty on the one hand, and to human industry on the other, we think too little of that Middle Truth which, nevertheless, *to ourselves* is the most significant of the three, namely—That the moral and intelligent instrumentality from the which the Sovereign Grace refuses to sever itself, is nothing else than the vital force which animates each single believer.

Does not the Omnipresent Spirit, rich in power to renovate human hearts, even now brood over the populous plains and crowded cities of India

and of China, as well as over the cities and plains of England? Is not God—even *our* God, locally present among the dense myriads that tread the precincts of idol worship?—Is He not ever, and in all places at hand; and wherever at hand, able also to save? Yes, but alas! the moral and rational instrumentality is not present in those dark places; and the immutable law of the spiritual world forbids that, apart from this system of means, the souls of men should be rescued.

Nor is the bare presence of the moral and rational instrument of conversion enough;—for its POWER resides in its QUALITY. The very same law—awful and inviolable, which demands its *presence*, demands also its *quality*, as the condition of its efficiency. Yes indeed, awful and inviolable law;—awful because inviolable; and awful to the Church, because it makes the salvation of mankind, in each successive generation, to lean with undivided stress, upon the purity and vigour of faith and charity, as found in the hearts of the Christians of each age, severally and collectively!

There might, we grant, seem more urgent need to make inquiry concerning the intrinsic condition of the Christian body in those times when its diffusive influence had sunk to the lowest point, or seemed quite to have failed, than when this influence was growing. And yet, inasmuch as hope is a motive incomparably

more efficacious than despondency, we should be prompt to avail ourselves of its aid whenever it makes its auspicious appearance. But the present hour is an hour of hope;—let us then seize the fair occasion, and turn it to the utmost advantage. This age of expectation is the time when vigilance and scrutiny, of every sort, should be put in movement, and should be directed inward upon the Church itself; for in the bosom of the Church rests the hope of the conversion of the world!

How culpable then, and how ignoble too, must we deem that spirit of jealousy or reluctance which would divert such a scrutiny, as if the honour of the Gospel were better secured by cloaking the faults of its adherents, than by labouring to dispel them! Shall we, as Christians, wish to creep under the shelter of a corrupt lenity? Shall we secretly wish that the time may never come—or at least, not come while we live, when the inveterate and deep-seated errors of the religious body shall be fairly dealt with, and honestly spread to the light? It may indeed be true that when we have to denounce the flagrant evils that abound in the world, and when open impiety and unbelief are to be reproved, we should use a serious severity; but then, when we turn homeward, shall we at once moderate our tones, and drop our voice, and plead for a sort of indulgence, as the favourites of heaven, which we are by no

means forward to grant to the uninstructed and irreligious portion of mankind? Shall our thunders always have a distant aim? Alas! how many generations of men have already lived and died untaught, while the Church has delicately smothered her failings, and has asked for an inobservant reverence from the profane world! True it is that the vices of heathens and infidels are grievous; but it is also true that the vices of the Church, if much less flagrant, and less mischievous in their immediate operation, are loaded with a peculiar aggravation, inasmuch as they destroy or impair the ONLY EXISTING MEANS for the repression and extermination of all error and all vice!

If then the alleged dependence of the religious welfare of mankind upon the vigour and purity of the Christian body be real, we find a full apology for whatever methods (even the most rigorous) that may conduce to its cleansing. All we need take care of is the *spirit* and *intention* of our reproofs. Should there be any, calling himself a disciple of Christ, who would protest against such impartial proceedings, he might properly be told that the inquiry in hand is too momentous, and is far too extensive in its consequences, than that it should be either diverted or relinquished in deference to the feelings or interests of the parties immediately concerned.—'Be it so,' we might say to the reluctant and faulty Christian, 'be it so,

that your spiritual delinquencies are not of so fatal a kind as to put in danger your personal salvation (an assumption, by the way, always hazardous) and let it be granted that you are chargeable only with certain infirmities of judgment, or with mere exuberances in temper or conduct;—yes, but these faults in *you*, as a Christian, and especially at the present critical moment, exert a negative power, the circle of which none can measure. Can you then desire that we should exercise a scrupulous tenderness toward you, while we forget pity towards the millions of mankind? Nay, rather, let every instrument of correction, and the most severe, be put in play, which may seem needful for restoring its proper force to the Gospel—the only means as it is of mercy to the world.' No, we must not flinch, although the sensitiveness and the vanity of thousands among us were to be intensely hurt. Let all—all be humbled, if such humiliation is indeed a necessary process that shall facilitate the conversion of the world.

Such then is the prime motive which should animate the difficult labour we have in hand. But there are other reasons, nor those very remote, that may properly be kept in view when it is attempted, as now, to lay bare the pernicious sentiments that have so often and so severely afflicted mankind.—If, just at the present moment, there seems little or no probability that

sanguinary and malignant superstitions should regain their lost ascendancy, can we say it is certain that no such evils, congruous as they are with the universal passions of man, shall henceforth be generated, and burst abroad? Manifest as it is that the human mind has a leaning toward gloomy and cruel excesses in matters of religion, whence can we derive a firm persuasion that this tendency shall, in all future ages, be held as much in check as now it is?—Not surely from broad and comprehensive calculations, such as a sound philosophy authenticates. The supposition that human nature has for ever discarded certain powerful emotions which awhile ago raged within its circle, must be deemed frivolous and absurd. How soon may we be taught to estimate more wisely the forces we have to guard against in our political and religious speculations! The frigid indifference and levity we see around us is but the fashion of a day; and a day may see it exchanged for the utmost extravagance, and for the highest frenzy of fanatical zeal. Human nature, let us be assured, is a more profound and boisterous element than we are apt to imagine, when it has happened to us for a length of time to stand upon the brink of the abyss in a summer season, idly gazing upon the rippled surface—gay in froth and sunbeams. What shall be the movements of the deep, and what the thunder of its rage, at nightfall, and when the winds are up!

Nothing less than the ample testimony of history can support general conclusions as to what is probable or not, in the course of events. And yet even the events of the last few years might be enough to prove that mankind, whatever may be the boasted advance of civilization, has by no means outgrown its propensity to indulge vindictive passions. Or can we have looked abroad during our own era, and believe that the fascinations of impudent imposture and egregious delusion are quite spent and gone? Rather let it be assumed as probable, at least as not impossible, that whatever intemperance, whatever atrocity, whatever folly, history lays to the charge of man, shall be repeated, perhaps in our own age, perhaps in the next.

The security which some may presume upon, against the reappearance of religious excesses, if founded on the present diffusion of intellectual and Biblical light, is likely to prove fallacious in two capital respects. In the first place, the inference is faulty because this spread of knowledge (in both kinds) though indeed wide and remarkable — or remarkable *by comparison,* is still in fact very limited, and its range bears an inconsiderable proportion to the broad surface of society, even in the most enlightened communities. If a certain number has reached that degree of intelligence which may be reckoned to exclude altogether the probability of violent movements, the dense masses of

society, on all sides, have hitherto scarcely been blessed by a ray of genuine illumination; moreover, there is in our own country, and in every country of Europe, a numerous middle class, whose progress in knowledge is of that sort which, while it fails to insure moderation or control of the passions, renders the mind only so much the more susceptible of imaginative excitements. Torpor, it is true, has to a great extent been dispelled from the European social system; but who shall say in what manner, or to what purposes, the returning powers of life shall be employed? In now looking upon the populace of the civilized world, such as the revolutionary excitements of the last fifty years have made it, one might fancy to see a creature of gigantic proportions just rousing itself, after a long trance, and preparing to move and act among the living. But, what shall be its deeds, and what its temper?—The most opposite expectations might be made to appear reasonable. Every thing favourable may be hoped for;—whatever is appalling may be feared. At least we may affirm that the belief entertained by some, that great agitations may not again produce great excesses; or that egregious delusions may not once more, even on the illuminated field of European affairs, draw after them, as in other ages, myriads of votaries, rests upon no solid grounds of experience or philosophy, and will be adopted only by those who judge

of human nature from partial or transient aspects, or who think that the frivolous incidents of yesterday and to-day afford a sufficient sample of all Time.

But a persuasion of this sort, founded on the spread of intelligence, whether secular or religious, seems faulty in another manner—namely, in attributing to knowledge, of either kind, more influence than it is actually found to exert over the passions and the imagination of the bulk of mankind. Education does indeed produce, in full, its proper effect to moderate the emotions, and as a preservative against delusion, in cold, arid, and calculating spirits; and it exerts also, in a good degree, the same sort of salutary influence over even the most turbulent or susceptible minds, up to that critical moment when the ordinary counterpoise of reason is overborne, and when some paramount motive gains ascendancy. This sudden overthrow of restraining principles—an overthrow to which sanguine and imaginative temperaments are always liable, is not often duly allowed for when it is attempted to forecast the course of human affairs.—We form our estimate of moral causes according to that rate of power at which we observe them *now* to be moving; but fail to anticipate what they shall become, perhaps the next instant, that is to say, when existing restraints of usage or feeling have been burst asunder.

The rush of the passions, on such occasions, is impetuous, just in proportion to the force that may have been overthrown; and whatever has given way before the torrent goes forward to swell the tide. There are those who, from their personal history, might confirm the truth that, when they have fallen, their fall was aggravated, not softened, by whatever advantages they possessed of intelligence or sensibility. And it is especially to be observed that, when the balance of the mind has once been lost, the power of intelligence or of knowledge to enhance the vehemence of malignant emotions, or to exaggerate preposterous conceits, is immeasurably greater on occasions of general excitement, or of public delusion, than in the instance of private and individual errors. Whence in fact does knowledge draw the chief part of its controlling force over the mind, but from the susceptibility it engenders to the opinions of those around us? In entering the commonwealth of intelligence do we not come under an influence that will probably out-measure the accession we may make of personal power? It is only on particular occasions that we regulate our conduct, or repress the violence of passion by self-derived inferences from what we know; while ordinarily and almost unconsciously, we apply to our modes of action and to our sentiments, those general maxims that float in the society of which we are members. If every

man's personal intelligence absolutely governed his behaviour, the empire of knowledge would indeed be much more firm than it is, because truth would take effect at all points of the surface of society, instead of touching only a few. But this not being the fact, whatever blind impulse awakens the passions of mankind affects all, individually, in a degree that bears little relation to the individual intelligence of each. The movements of a community when once excited, are far more passionate and less rational, than an estimate of its average intelligence might lead us to expect.

If it be so, it must happen that when once a turn is made in the general tendency of men's feelings—when once a certain order of sentiment, or a certain course of conduct has come to be authenticated;—if, for example, some dark, cruel, or profligate rule of policy is assented to as necessary or just, all men in particular, in yielding themselves to the stream of affairs, will plunge into it with an impetuosity proportioned to their personal intelligence and energy of mind. Every man in assenting to the general conclusion, because assented to by others, would strengthen himself and others, in the common purpose, by all those means of knowledge and powers of argument which he possessed. If the error or extravagance had been his own, exclusively, his faculty and furniture of mind would have been employed in defending himself from

the assaults of other men's good sense; and human nature does not, under such circumstances, often accumulate much force.—But the same faculties moving forward with the multitude, on a broad triumphant road, swell and expand and possess themselves of the full dominion of the soul.

At this present moment of general indifference the breaking forth of *any* species of fanaticism may seem highly improbable. We ought however to look beyond to-day and yesterday;—we should survey the general face of history, and should inspect too the depths of the human heart, and calculate the power of its stronger passions.—Disbelief is the ephemeron of our times; but disbelief, far from being natural to man, can never be more than a reaction that comes on, as a faintness, after a season of credulity and superstition. And how soon may a revulsion take place! How soon, after the hour of exhaustion has gone by, may the pleasurable excitements of high belief and of unbounded confidence be eagerly courted!—courted by the vulgar in compliance with its relish of whatever is pungent and intense;—courted by the noble as a means, or as a pretext of power;—courted by the frivolous as a relief from lassitude; and by the profound and thoughtful, as the proper element of minds of that order!

Whenever the turn of BELIEF shall come round

(we are not here speaking of a genuine religious faith) empassioned sentiments, of all kinds, will follow without delay: nor can any thing less than a revival of Christianity in its fullest force then avail to ward off those excesses of fanaticism and intolerance, and spiritual arrogance which heretofore have raged in the world. The connexion of CREDULITY with VIRULENCE is deep seated in the principles of human nature, and it should not be deemed impertinent or unseasonable at any time to attempt to trace to its origin this order of sentiments, or to lay bare the fibres of its strength:—unless indeed, we will profess to think that man is no more what once he was.

SECTION II.

THE MEANING OF TERMS—RISE OF THE MALIGN EMOTIONS.

EVERY term, whether popular or scientific, which may be employed to designate the affections or the individual dispositions of the human mind, is more or less indeterminate, and is liable to many loose and improper extensions of the sense which a strict definition might assign to it. This disadvantage—the irremediable grievance of intellectual philosophy, has its origin in the obscurity and intricacy of the subject; and is besides much aggravated by the changing fashions of speech, which neither observe scientific precision, nor are watched over with any care.—Men speak not entirely as they think; but as they think and hear; and in what relates to things impalpable few either think or hear attentively. All ethical and religious phrases, and those psychological terms which derive their specific sense from the principles of religion, besides partaking fully of the above-named disparagements, common to intellectual

subjects, labour under a peculiar inconvenience, not shared by any others of that class. For if the mass of men are inaccurate and capricious in their mode of employing the abstruse portion of language, they entertain too often, in what relates to religion, certain capital errors—errors which ordinarily possess the force and activity of virulent prejudices, and which impart to their modes of speaking, not indistinctness indeed, but the vivid and positive colours of a strong delusion.

It is not the small minority of persons soundly informed in matters of religion, that gives law to the language of a country;—or even if it did, this class is not generally qualified, by habits or education, to fix and authenticate a philosophical nomenclature. From these peculiar disadvantages it inevitably follows that when, by giving attention to facts, we have obtained precise notions on subjects of this sort, or at least have approximated to truth, it will be found impracticable to adjust the result of our inquiries to the popular and established sense of any of the terms which may offer themselves to our option. The mass of mankind, besides their backwardness always to exchange a loose and vague, for a definite and restricted notion, do not fail to descry, in any definition that is at once philosophical and *religious*, some cause of offence.—The new-sharpened phrase is felt to have an edge that wounds inveterate prejudice, and

rankles in the heart; and the writer who is seen to be thus whetting afresh his words, is deemed to entertain a hostile purpose, and is met with a correspondent hostility. Nor is much more favour to be looked for from the religious classes who, always alarmed at the slightest change in venerable modes of speech, will scent a heresy in every such definition.

If then new terms are not to be created (a procedure always undesirable) and if the intolerable inconvenience of a ponderous periphrasis is also to be avoided, the best that can be done, amid so many difficulties, is to select a phrase which, more nearly than any other (of those commonly in use) conveys the notion we have obtained; and then to append a caution, explicit or implied, against the misunderstandings to which the writer, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, is exposed.

In the instance of every term connected with religious principles or modes of feeling, there must of course be admitted a far wider departure from the etymological or *ancient*, than from the modern and popular sense they bear. If the recent and vulgar meaning of such phrases be incorrect, or delusive, how much more so must be the remote and original meaning!—Whither does the *etymon* carry us, but to altogether a foreign region of thought? In matters of religion a revolution has taken place, upon all lettered nations, which, while it leaves

human nature the same, has imparted a new substance, a new form, and a new relative position, to every notion that respects Invisible Power, and human conduct.

Preposterous therefore would be the pedantry of a writer who, in discoursing, for example, of Superstition, or Enthusiasm, should confine himself to such a definition of those terms as might comport with the sense they bore, centuries ago, in the minds of Lucian, Plutarch, Epictetus, or Aristotle! Even many of the less fluctuating ethical abstractions have dropped almost the whole of their primeval significance in the course of ages. Is *Justice*, in the sense of an Athenian populace, or in the sense of the "Senate and People of Rome," the justice either of English law, or of English opinion? Has the *Virtue* of Sparta much analogy with the virtue of Christian ethics? Where, in modern times (except indeed among the slave-holders of republican America) where shall we find a meaning of the word *Liberty* which has even a remote resemblance to the sense attached to it by the ferocious lords of miserable Lacedæmonian helots?

The passions of man are permanent; but the difference between polytheism and true theology —how much soever true theology may in any instance be encumbered or obscured, is so vast, as to leave nothing that belongs to the circle of religious emotion unchanged.

Thus it is that the FANATIC of the Grecian and Roman writers is hardly, if at all, to be recognized as predecessor of the Fanatic of Christendom; and although, for purposes of illustration, or of mere curiosity, we may hereafter glance (once and again) at some of the ancient and long-obsolete forms of religious extravagance, it is with the modern species (practical inferences being our prime object) that we shall, in the following pages, chiefly be conversant.

In a former instance (Natural History of Enthusiasm) the author was not insensible of the disadvantage he laboured under in adopting a phrase which perhaps more than any other (the one he has now to do with excepted) is employed in every imaginable diversity of meaning, and to which, in truth, every man, as he utters it, assigns a sense that reflects his personal rate of feeling in matters of religion. One man's Enthusiasm being only another man's Sobriety. Before such diversities can be harmonised not only must mankind be taught to think with precision, but must come also to an agreement on the great principles of piety.

Discordances, still more extreme, belong to the popular senses of the word FANATICISM; for inasmuch as it takes up a more pungent element than the term *Enthusiasm*, it commonly draws some special emphasis from the virulence or prejudices of the mouth whence it issues:—the word is the favourite missile of that opprobrious

contempt wherewith Irreligion defends itself in its difficult position; and it is hurled often with the indiscriminate vehemence that belongs to infuriate fear. The sense attached to a term when *so* employed must of course differ immensely from that which it bears in the mind of the dispassionate observer of mankind, and especially of one who takes up the truths of Christianity as the best and most certain clew to the philosophy of human nature.

Once for all then, the author requests the reader to remember that he is not professing to be either lexicographer or scholastic disputant; nor does he assume it as any part of his business to adjust the nice proprieties of language; but aims rather, on a very important subject, to make himself understood, while he describes a certain class of pernicious sentiments, which too often have been combined with religious belief. In another volume spurious and imaginative religious emotions were spoken of: our present task is to describe the various combinations of THE SAME SPURIOUS PIETISM with the MALIGN PASSIONS.

After quite rejecting from our account that opprobrious sense of the word Fanaticism which the virulent calumniator of religion and of the religious assigns to it, it will be found, as we believe, that the elementary idea attaching to the term in its manifold applications, is that of *fictitious fervour* in religion, rendered turbulent,

morose, or rancorous, by junction with some one or more of the unsocial emotions. Or if a definition as brief as possible were demanded, we should say, that FANATICISM IS ENTHUSIASM INFLAMED BY HATRED.

A glance at the rise and reason of the irascible emotions will facilitate our future progress. Our subject being an instance of the combination of these emotions with other principles, we ought distinctly to have in view the elements; and to note also some of their coalescent forms.

The difficulty that attends analysis in the science of mind (science so called) belongs in a peculiar manner to those instances in which we endeavour to trace the original construction of passions or impulses that scarcely ever present themselves otherwise than in an exaggerated and corrupted condition. It is usual, if an object of philosophic curiosity be obscure or evanescent, to single out for examination the most marked examples of the class. But to take this course in an analysis of the passions is to seek for primitive elements where most they have lost their original form, and have suffered the most injury.

What the contour and symmetry of the moral form was, as it came from the hand of the Creator, may be more readily determined in the dry method of ethical definition, than vividly conceived of; and this is especially true of those

emotions which imply the presence of evil. How delicate is the task—if indeed it be a practicable one, to trace the line between nature (in the best sense) and deformity—between the true and the false, in these instances! And yet, not the most rancorous or foul of the malign sentiments can be thought any thing else than a disordered state of some power indispensable to the constitution of a rational and independent agent. We need then take care lest, in our haste to condemn what is evil, we should denounce as such that of which God himself is author, and which, if we think closely, cannot even be conceived of as altogether wanting in a being placed where man is placed.

Within a certain line there can however be no difficulty in deciding between good and evil. It is quite obvious that a passion or appetite, subservient to some specific purpose, is in an irregular state when it overpasses or fails to secure that purpose:—the end must give law to the means; and where the end may clearly be defined, the limit which the means should reach is not hard to ascertain. Either by EXCESS and too great intensity—or by PERVERSION, or misdirection from their proper object—or by PROLONGATION from momentary impulses to habits and permanent qualities, as well the animal appetites as the irascible passions assume a pernicious form, and derange the harmony of nature.

Which of the emotions or desires it is that may justly claim to be not subservient, but paramount, and may therefore safely be prolonged, and impart themselves as qualities to the mind, Nature distinctly informs us, by rendering them always agreeable; while some uneasiness, or even positive pain, is attached to the continuance of every one of those feelings which, in her intention, are only to measure out a momentary occasion, and which ought to rise and disappear in the same hour.

It is thus, we need hardly say, with the bodily appetites, which disturb the system (as well corporeal as mental) whenever they do more than accomplish their definite purpose. Indispensable as these impulses are to the machinery of life, they take a noxious quality when they are detained: their property should be to evaporate without residuum. Each, moreover, has its specific object, and throws every other function into disorder if it become fastidious: and each too must observe its due amount of force.

The same is true of all forms of the irascible emotions, which can never go beyond their purpose, and especially can never pass into dispositions, without vitiating the character. Each single instance of excessive excitement contributes, shall we say, the whole amount of its excess to the formation of a habit of the same class; and then these habits—emotions parted from

their occasions, soon run into some sort of perversion, or become misdirected. Unoccupied desire strays from its path, and attaches itself perniciously to whatever objects it may meet. It is thus that human nature subsides into its most corrupted states. A certain mode of feeling is generated, of the utter unreasonableness of which the mind is dimly conscious, and to rid itself of the uneasy sense of being absurd, rushes on toward sentiments still more preposterous, that by their aid it may quite surround itself with false impressions, and lose all recollection of calm truths. As there is an intoxication of the animal appetites, so is there an intoxication of the malign passions; and perhaps if we could completely analyse some extreme instance of dark and atrocious hatred—hatred when it constitutes the fixed condition of the soul, we should find that the miserable being has become what he is by the impulse of a perpetual endeavour to drown self-reproach and inward contempt, in deeper and deeper draughts of the cup of poison.

Up to that point where the subordinate principles of our nature become transmuted into permanent qualities, imparting a character to the mind, it is easy to discern their reason and propriety as constituents of the physical and moral life; nor can we fail to perceive that each is attended with a provision for restraining it within due limits. Thus it is, as we have said,

that while the machinery of animal life is impelled by the sense of pleasure which is attached to the brief activity of the appetites, an admonitory uneasiness attends the excessive indulgence, or protracted excitement of them. Consistently with this same regard to ulterior purposes, the irascible emotions, in their *native state*, are denied any attendant pleasurable sense; or at most so small an element of pleasure belongs to them, that the pain consequent upon their excess or their continuance is always paramount. The dash of gratification, if there be any, does but give momentary life to the rising energy, and then passes off.

The irascible passions can be allowed to have respect to nothing beyond the preservation of life, or of its enjoyments, in those unforeseen occasions when no other means but an instantaneous exertion of more than the ordinary force, both of body and mind, and especially of the latter, could avail for the purpose of defence:—anger is the safeguard of beings not housed, like the tortoise, within an impenetrable crust; and if man had been born cased in iron, or were an ethereal substance, he would probably have been furnished with no passionate resentments. Nevertheless every good purpose of such emotions has been answered when the faculties have received that degree and kind of stimulus which the exigency of the moment demanded; and their continuance must be always

(if it were nothing worse) a waste and a perversion of power; since the conservative ends they may seem to have in view are far more certainly secured by other means when the sudden peril is gone by. Malign *dispositions* and vindictive *habits* are, shall we say, miserable encumbrances of the mind; as if a man would sustain the load of bulky armour, night and day, and carry shield and lance, though probably he will not encounter a foe once in the year. The checks of opinion, the motives of mutual interest; and at last the provisions of law, and the arm of the body politic, are in readiness to defend us from every aggression, those only excepted which must be repelled at the instant they are made, or not at all.

That brisk excitement of the faculties which a sudden perception of danger occasions, not merely bears proportion to the nearness and extent of the peril, but has a relation to its *quality* and its supposed origin. This excitement, to answer its end, must possess an affinity with the aggressive cause.—The repellant power must be such as is the assailant power. A quick sympathy with the hostile purpose of an antagonist belongs to the emotion at the impulse of which we are to withstand his attack. Simple fear, and its attendant courage, are enough if the danger we have to meet arises from material causes only; or if a mechanical injury is all that is thought of. But anger, and the courage peculiar to anger, is called up when MIND contends

with MIND, that is to say, when an injury is to be warded off which (whether truly so or not) we believe to spring from the inimical intention of a being like ourselves. In this case matter and its properties are forgotten, or are thought of as the mere instruments of the threatened harm, while we rouse ourselves to grapple, soul against soul, with our foe.

For the very same reason that some knowledge, more or less accurate, of the laws of matter (whether acquired by the methods of science, or by common experience) is indispensable as our guide in avoiding or repelling physical evils, so is an intuition of *motives* necessary to our safety when it is a hostile purpose that originates the danger we are exposed to. Successfully to resist an impending harm, we must rightly conceive of its occult cause.

There may be those who would ask—"Why should we suppose these irascible emotions, liable as they are to abuse, and destructive as they often become, to be original ingredients of our nature; or why needs man be furnished with any impulses more potent or complex than those given him as a defence against physical injuries?" The answer is not difficult.—An additional motive and a more vigorous spring is needed in the one case which is not requisite in the other, because the danger in the one is of a far more recondite quality than in the other, and demands a commensurate provision. If, for our safety, we must

know to what extent, at what distances, and under what conditions, fire may destroy or torment us; we must, for a like reason, know the nature, extent, and conditions of the harm that may arise from the rage of a furious man. Now it does not appear that the extreme exigency of the moment could be met in any way so efficaciously — if at all, as by this sudden sympathy with the ill intention of our enemy—a sympathy which, as by a flash of consciousness, puts us into possession of his evil purpose. The rage or the malice of the aggressor, thus reflected (if dimly yet truly) upon the imagination of whoever is its object, informs him, with the rapidity of lightning, of all he should prepare himself to meet. May we not properly admire the simplicity and the fitness of this machinery?

It is quite another question, and one which does not now press upon us—Whence comes that first malignant purpose or hostile intention against which the irascible emotions are provided? Evil existing as it does, we are here concerned only with the arrangement made for repelling it. Let it then be remembered, that inasmuch as the hostile powers of MIND are far more pernicious, because more various, insidious and pertinacious than those of matter (which can move only in a single direction) there is required more motive and more energy to resist them. Now this necessary accession of power is, might we say, borrowed for the moment when it is wanted, by

sympathy from the aggressor. He who rises in fatal rage upon his fellow, does, by the contrivance of nature, and at the very instant of his violent act, put into the hand of his victim a weapon that may actually avert the stroke. The vicious and exaggerated condition in which these passions usually present themselves (a condition accidental, not necessary) should not prevent our assigning to the wisdom and benignity of the Creator what conspicuously exhibits both. And surely it is becoming to us to rescue (if so we may speak) the praise of the Supreme in those instances where most it is obscured by the evils that have supervened upon his work.

Yet all we see around us of the wisdom and benevolence of the Author of Nature, especially as displayed in the constitution of the sentient orders, would stand contradicted if it appeared that passionate resentments were otherwise than painful.* In fact we do not find them to be entertained as modes of gratification until after they have gone into the unnatural condition of permanent qualities; and even then the gratification, if such it can be called, is wrung out from the very torments of the heart. When indeed these dark emotions have formed alliance with imaginative sentiments, they at once lose a portion of their virulence, and borrow a sense of pleasure, which may become very vivid. Some

* ——ὁ δὲ ὀργῇ ποιῶν πᾶς, ποιεῖ λυπούμενος.

remarkable cases of this sort our proper subject will lead us to consider.

There is, however, an instance that may seem to be at variance with our assumptions; and it is one which should be fairly looked at.—Of what sort then is the pleasure of consummated revenge; and whence does it spring?—or must we trace it to the original constitution of the mind? To answer such a question we should go back to the elements of the moral sense.—Let it then be remembered that this sense, indispensable as it is to rational agency and to responsibility, implies, not only a consciousness of pleasure in the view of what is good, benign, and generous; but an equal and correspondent feeling (necessarily painful) towards the opposite qualities, whether of single actions or of character. We cannot so much as form a conception of a moral sense that should possess one of these faculties apart from the other:—as well suppose the eye to be percipient of light, but unconscious of darkness. The power of approval is a nullity, if it do not involve a power of disapproval and disgust. What sort of languid and vague instinct were it, which, though capable of high delight in the contemplation of virtue and beneficence, should look listlessly and without emotion upon the infliction of wanton torture, or upon acts of injustice, fraud, or impurity? We may indeed imagine a world into which no evils and no discords or deformities should gain admis-

sion; but it is impossible to conceive of sentient beings endowed with faculties of pleasure, such as should involve no power of suffering. Whoever would be capable of exalted happiness must undergo the possibility of misery, equally intense; or if the power of enjoyment be greater than the power of suffering, the whole amount of the difference is just so much torpor, or so much relaxation. A sense or faculty may indeed be numbed or paralyzed; but although such damage should secure an exemption from pain, no one would boast of it as a natural perfection.

The sense of fitness, whence arises our acquiescence in retributive proceedings, as well penal as remunerative, implies, an uneasiness not to be dismissed, or even an intense consciousness of pain, so long as merited punishment is diverted, or delayed, or its ultimate arrival is held in doubt. Few emotions, perhaps none, are more racking than that which attends the indeterminate delay of righteous retribution. And then, as every faculty of pleasure involves a liability to pain, so does a sudden release from pain, mental or bodily, bring with it a sensation which, if we must hesitate to call it pleasure, it will be hard to designate at all.—Thus the extreme uneasiness that attends the delay of retribution, is, when at length relieved by the infliction of due punishment, followed by an emotion (very transient in benignant minds) which, if it may not be called pleasurable, must

remain undescribed. We have only to add that, as the exaggerations of self-love render the common desire of retribution intense—shall we say intolerable, if *self* be the sufferer, so, and in the same degree, will the pleasurable sense of relief be enhanced when, after a doubtful delay, ample retribution alights on its victim.—The continuance, or the brief duration of this malign gratification might well be taken as a gauge of the nobility or baseness of the mind that entertains it.—If a generous spirit admits at all any such emotion, it will refuse to give it lodgement longer than a moment, and will gladly return to sentiments of compassion and forgiveness. On the contrary, a mind, by disposition and habit rancorous, derives from an achieved revenge a sweetness not soon spent, and which is resorted to year after year as a cordial.

So jealous is Nature of her constitutions that she rigorously visits every infringement of them.—To revolve or entertain any desire at a distance from its due occasion, and in the absence of its fit object, is always to undergo some degree of corruption of the faculties—a corruption which, if not checked, spreads as a canker even through the powers of animal life. All kinds of introverted mental action, even of the most innocent sort, are more or less debilitating to both mind and body, and trebly so when attended by powerful emotions. Might it not be said that health—

both animal and intellectual, is Emanative movement, or a progression from the centre, outwards: and is not disease a movement in the reverse direction? Assuredly those vices are the most destructive, the most rancorous, and the most inveterate, which are peculiarly meditative, or the characteristic of which is *rumination.*

By extending themselves beyond their immediate occasion, the irascible passions are quickly converted from acts into habits.—Thus anger becomes petulance or hatred:—wrath slides into cruelty; disgust into moroseness; dislike into envy; and at last the whole course of nature is "set on fire;" or worse—undergoes the tortures of a slow and smothered combustion.

The transition of the passions from momentary energies to settled dispositions, does not advance far (much less does it reach its completion) without the aid of what may be termed a *reverberative process,* not very difficult to be traced.—That quick sympathy which vivifies the impressions of anger, by attributing an ill intention to him who assails us, accompanies, and even in a higher degree, the same class of feelings in their transmuted form of permanent sentiments. A malign temper imputes to an adversary, not a momentary hostility; but *an evil nature* and a settled animosity like its own. The supposition takes its measure and its quality from the sentiment whence it springs; and as the irascible emotion has now become a constant mood of the mind, so

is *malignant character* made over and assigned to whoever is its object. Evil passions at this stage, are fast attaining their maturity, and fail not soon to gain absolute mastery over the soul. The meditation of evil abroad, inflames evil at home: the infatuated being in idea challenges its adversary to take a lodgement even within the palpitating ramparts of the heart, so that the conflict may go on as an intestine war at all hours, and in all seasons:—night does not part the combatants; nay rather is it then that, like other savage natures which stalk forth from their lairs in the dark, envenomed hatreds (while children of peace are sleeping) wake up, and rend their prey.

If anger be simply painful, hatred involves the very substance of misery. How should it then, we may ask, subsist in the human mind, the first instinct of which is the desire of happiness? Strong as is this instinct, it takes effect only under certain conditions.—There are circumstances which impel us to hold even our love of enjoyment in abeyance, or which make us refuse to taste the least gratification until the disturbance of feeling that has happened is adjusted. Do not minds of a sensitive order repel every solicitation of pleasure so long as one beloved suffers; and this, even when the object of fondness is far distant, and quite beyond the reach of any active service?—The happiness of those we love, if indeed we be capable of love, is an indispensable condition of our own.—And

there are other necessary conditions of personal peace, and some so inseparable from human nature that they can never be evaded. Of these we have already mentioned that which belongs to the Retributive sentiment, and which forbids us to rest while the author of a wrong enjoys impunity.

A sort of fascination leads on the tortured soul that is the victim of these feelings in a double line; on the one hand it eagerly pursues its desire of revenge; and on the other, labours with indefatigable zeal to establish its own conviction of the malignant nature of its adversary. In its efforts to obtain this double satisfaction, it revolves hourly all evidences, real or imaginary, of the innate atrocity of its foe; for if *this* point were but fully settled, SELF would be cleared of the imputation of wrong, and the arrival of retribution would seem so much the more probable. But far from reaching a definite conclusion of this sort, with which it might rest satisfied, and so return to the common enjoyments of life, the racked spirit feels from day to day that the very cogitation of its doubt only enhances the motives that give it force. Inflamed and insatiate, the distracted being returns ever and again to the salt stream that, at every draught, aggravates its thirst! In this fever of the heart the assuagement of the inward torment by the destruction of its adversary, is the only happiness it can think of.

And yet even the most extreme and deplorable instances that could be adduced of the predominance of the malignant passions, would serve to attest, at once the excellence of the original constitution of human nature, and the indestructible property of its moral instincts. Not the most furious or irascible of men can indulge his passion until after he has attributed an ill intention to the object of his wrath. To be angry with that which is seen and confessed to be innoxious or devoid of hostile feeling, is a reach of malignity that lies beyond the range of *human* passions, even when most corrupted or most inflamed. How else can we account for the absurd use which the angry man makes of the *prosopopœia* when he happens to be hurt, torn, or opposed by an inanimate object:—the stone, the steel, the timber, which has given him a fall, or has obstructed his impatience, he curses on the *hypothesis* that it is conscious and inimical:—nay, he would fain breathe a soul into the senseless mass, that he might the more reasonably revile and crush it.

And so, when hatred has become the settled temper of the mind, there attends it a bad ingenuity, which puts the worst possible construction upon the words, actions, looks, of the abhorred object. Yet why is this but because the laws of the moral system forbid that any thing should be hated but what actually deserves, or is at the moment thought to deserve abhorrence?

The most pernicious and virulent heart has no power of ejecting its venom upon a fair surface;—it must slur, whatever it means to poison. To hate that which is seen and confessed to be not *wicked,* is as impossible as to be angry with that which is not assumed to be *hostile.* And the most depraved souls, whose only element is revenge, feel the stress of this necessity not a whit less than the most benign and virtuous. Whether the universe any where contains spirits so malignant as to be capable of hating without assignment of demerit, or attributing of ill purpose to their adversary, we know not; but certainly *man* never reaches any such frightful enormity.*

What is the constant style of the misanthrope? What the burthen of the dull echoes that shake the damps from the roof of his cavern? Is not his theme ever and again—the malignity, the cruelty, the falseness, of the human race? To hate mankind is indeed his rule; but yet he must calumniate before he can detest it. Nature is here stronger than corruption, and a tribute is borne to the unalterable principles of virtue, even by those unnatural lips that breathe universal imprecations! How does the solitary wretch — prisoner as he is

* The mere supposition may seem to be a contradiction in terms;—that what is not hateful should be hated. But the analysis of emotions of this sort, if carried on a little further, brings us to some such notion as that of malignity separable from an object confessed to be odious.

of his own malignity, toil from day to day in the work of ingenious detraction! how does he recapitulate and refute, untired, the thousandth time, every alleged extenuation of human frailty or folly! How does he strive to *justify* the bad passion that rules him;—how eagerly does he listen to any new proof of his poisonous dogma—That man is altogether abominable, and *ought* to be hated! Inwardly he feels the sheer absurdity of perpetual malice, and is always defending himself against the accusation of doing immense wrong to his species. But this very labour, and this painful ingenuity refutes itself; for if human nature were, as he affirms it to be, simply and purely evil, his own bosom would not be thus tortured by the endeavour to prove mankind abominable, as a necessary condition of his malice. Most evident it is that if man were not formed to love what is good and follow virtue, he would find himself able to hate his fellows without first imputing to them wickedness and crimes!

There might be adduced a still more frightful case of malignancy, which, horrid as it is, furnishes the very same testimony in favour of the original benign structure of the human mind. If there are indeed miserable beings that harbour deliberate animosity against Him who is worthy of supreme affection, as well as reverence, yet this hatred must always be preceded by *blasphemy*. In word or in thought, there must

be charged upon the Sovereign Ruler injustice, rigour, malevolence, before impiety can advance a step toward its bold and dread climax. Thus does the Supreme Benevolence secure and receive an implicit homage, even from the most envenomed lips; for why should the divine character be impeached, if it were not that the fixed laws of the moral world—those very laws of which God is author, forbid hatred to exist at all (at least in human nature) *except on a pretext which is itself drawn from the maxims of goodness?* What proof can be more convincing than this is, that these same maxims, these rules of virtue and benevolence, were actually the guiding principles of the creation, and must therefore belong as essential attributes to the Creator?* If man, by the necessity of his nature, must calumniate and blacken whomsoever he would call his enemy, is it not because he is so constituted as to detest only what he thinks to be evil? The fact indeed is appalling, that rational agents should any where exist who can set themselves in array against the source and centre of all perfection. But how much more appalling, nay—how horrible a thing were it, to find any beings whose nature allowed them to hate the Sovereign Goodness without first defaming it!

The lower we descend into the depths of the malignant passions, the more striking are the proofs we meet with of the vigour of the prime

principles of the moral life. There are, alas! scarcely any bounds to the degree of corruption or depravity which man may reach; but corruption or decay is something far less than *destruction of elements;* and no facts come within our sphere of observation which would imply that the original principles of the rational economy are in any case annulled. We have already spoken of the instinct of Retribution, or the vehement desire to see wrong visited with punishment; and we discern, in even the darkest purpose of revenge, nothing more than a particular instance of this same instinct, inflamed and misdirected by preposterous self-love. No case can be more conclusive in proof of this position than the revenge of jealousy. When the firmest, and the most religious of the social ties has been torn asunder by the hand of ruthless lust, and an affection, more sensitive than any other, is left to bleed and ulcerate in open air, the inner structure of the vindictive passion may be said to be laid open, and it is seen in what way an emotion so violent as to lead to fatal acts, yet connects itself with virtuous sentiments, and in fact springs from them. The revenge of jealousy seems, to the injured man, to be justified at once by the best impulses of our nature, by the express sanction of God, by the opinion of mankind, and by the formal institutes of society. These authorities, or some of them, lend a palliation (deemed

almost valid by the common feeling of men) even to deeds of a murderous kind; and they actually avail to put out of view the exaggerations which self-love has added to the sense of wrong. Thus it is that some, who, in no other case would for a moment harbour so hateful and torturing a passion, yield to its sway when thus injured, and feel as if uncondemned by even the strictest rules of virtue. It is true that principles of conduct of a higher kind are applicable, as well to this, as to all other instances of injury, and are fully adequate to assuage even so extreme a vindictive impulse. But whether they are actually brought to bear upon it or not, it is certain that the revenge of jealousy affords evidence that the elements of the moral system are the foundation of even the most fatal of the malignant passions, and in their most aggravated forms.

Let leave here be taken to draw an inference which suggests itself, bearing perhaps upon the future destinies of man. Does not then the history of human nature declare that all other emotions of the soul, as well as every inducement of interest or pride, may give way, and be borne down by the sovereign desire of retribution? Has not this feeling more than once impelled a father to consign his sons to the sword of public justice? Has it not strengthened the arm of a man, not murderous in disposition, to drive an assassin's sword into the

heart of his friend? Has it not brought together an armed nation around the walls of a devoted city, the site of which, after being soaked with the blood of men, women, and babes, was to be covered with perpetual ruin? Does not this same robust instinct every day sustain the most humane minds in discharging the sad duty of conducting a fellow-man to death? We see too, to what a degree of frenzy the common desire of retribution may be inflamed by the suggestions of self-love. Now may it not be conceived of that an equal intensity of this emotion might be obtained by the means of some other sentiment than self-love, and by one more firm because more sound than the selfish principle? If so, then we have under our actual inspection powers which, in a future life, may be found vigorous enough to carry human nature through scenes or through services too appalling even to think or speak of. If, for example, it were asked—"Is it credible that man, his sensibilities being such as they are, should take his part, even as spectator, in the final procedures of the Divine Government?" We might fairly reply by referring to certain signal instances of the force of the vindictive passions, and on the ground of such facts assume it as *possible* that, whoever could go so far, might go further still. And this hypothetic inference would not be invalidated merely because revenge is malign and evil: for although it be

so, the fulcrum of its power is nothing else than the unalterable laws of the moral world; we only want therefore a *righteous* motive to supplant the *selfish* one, and then an equal, or perhaps a much greater force, would be displayed by these same principles.

If it be allowable to advance to this point, we then shall need only one more idea to give distinctness to our conception of the retributive processes of the future world;—and it is this—That the infatuations of self-love, which, in the present state, defend every mind from the application to itself of the desire of retribution—in the same manner as the principle of animal life defends the vital organs of a body from the chemical action of its own caustic secretions—that these infatuations, we say, being then quite dispersed, the Instinct of Justice—perhaps the most potent of all the elements of the spiritual life, shall turn inward upon each consciously guilty heart, so that every such heart shall become the prey of a reflected rage, intense and corrosive as the most virulent revenge! Whoever is now hurrying on without thought of consequences through a course of crimes, would do well to imagine the condition of a being left without relief to breathe upon itself the flames of an insatiable hatred!

SECTION III.

ALLIANCE OF THE MALIGN EMOTIONS WITH THE IMAGINATION.*

If nature denies to the irascible passions any attendant sense of pleasure, she absolutely refuses them also, at least in their simple state, the power of awakening the sympathy, or of exciting

* The copiousness of our subject must exclude whatever does not directly conduce to its illustration. Otherwise it would be proper here to mention those complex dispositions which spring from the union of the malignant passions with the elements of individual character. The irascible sentiment, for example, takes a specific form from the peculiarities of the animal structure. Combined with conscious muscular vigour, and a sanguineous temperament, it becomes a stormy rage, and constitutes either the bully, or the dread devastator of kingdoms, as circumstances may determine. The same irascibility, joined with a feeble constitution, begets petulance, in those various forms which depend upon the particular *seat* of debility; namely, whether it be the nervous system—the arterial system—the mesenteric glands—the liver, or the stomach; each of which imparts a peculiarity to the temper. An attentive observer of the early developement of character will also leave room, in any theory of the passions he may construct, for a hitherto unexplored and undefined influence of *conformation*—ought we to say of the *brain*, or of the *mind?* How much soever (from various motives) any might wish to simplify their philosophy of human nature, and especially to exclude from it certain facts which give rise to painful perplexities, they can do so only (as we think) by refusing to turn the eye toward the real world.

After receiving their first characteristic from the physical temperament, the malign emotions next ally themselves with the instinct of

the admiration of those who witness their ebullition. These harsh elements of the moral system must be taken into combination with sentiments of a different, and a happier order, and must almost be concealed within such sentiments, before they can assume any sort of beauty, or appear in splendour. That such combinations do actually take place, and in conformity too with the intentions of nature, is true; but it is true also, that by the very means of the mixture, the worse or rancorous element is vastly moderated and refined. Let it be granted, for example, that wars have often originated in the military ambition and false thirst of glory to

self-love, and generate either a sullen and obdurate pride, which makes every other being an enemy, as a supposed impugner of rights and honours that are its due; or else (and especially as combined with derangement of the hepatic functions) begets a rabid jealousy or reptile envy—passion of the most wretched natures! Our modern intellectual science yet wants a term to serve in the place of that theologico-metaphysic one—THE WILL. Analysis must be pushed a little further than it has gone before the deficiency can be well supplied. Meanwhile let us say that the malign passions have a characteristic alliance with "the will"—an alliance if not clearly to be distinguished from those it forms with self-love, yet distinct enough to arrest attention. As a single example we might name that undefined, and not easily analysed, cruelty or wanton and tranquil delight in torments, bloodshed, and destruction, which has given a dread notoriety to some few names in history. In such cases it has seemed as if the spontaneous principle would prove its force and its independence in the mode that should, more effectively than any other, make all men confess it to be free. Instances of malignity meet us which are at once too placid to be charged entire upon the irascible emotions, and too vague to be accounted for by the inducements of either selfishness or pride, and which, if they do not declare the presence of a *determining cause* that has no immediate dependence upon assignable motives, must remain quite unexplained.

which certain gorgeous sentiments give an appearance of virtue. This may be true, but can we easily estimate the degree in which war universally has been softened and relieved in its attendant horrors, by the corrective influence of these very mixed emotions, extravagant and false as they are? And is it certain that there would have been altogether less bloodshed on earth, if mere sanguinary rage, and if the cupidity of empire, had been left to work their ends alone? For every thousand victims immolated at the altar of martial pride, have not ten thousand been rescued by the noble and generous usages that have belonged to the system of warfare among all civilized nations? Surely it may be said that, unless the imaginative sentiments had thus blended themselves with the destructive passions, the ambition of men would have been like that of fiends, and the human family must long ago have suffered extermination.

Ideas of chivalrous virtue and of royal magnanimity (ideas directly springing from the imagination) much more than any genuine sentiments of humanity, have softened the ferocious pride of mighty warriors. For though it may be true that some sparks or rare flashes of mere compassion have, once and again, gleamed from the bosoms of such men; yet assuredly if good will to their fellows had been more than a transient emotion, the sword would never have been their toy. But the imaginative sentiments are a

middle powers in the hands of nature, which, because they may be combined more readily than some higher principles, with the gross and dark ingredients of the human mind, serve so much the better to chasten or ameliorate what cannot be quite expelled. Except for emotions of this order, Alexander would have been as Tamerlane; and Tamerlane as the Angel of Death.

The beneficial provisions of Nature are especially to be observed in one remarkable fact—namely—That the alliance of the malign passions with the Imagination—an alliance from which the former draw both their mitigation, and an extension of their field, is not permitted to take place upon the narrow ground of self-love.—This fact, for such we deem it, deserves to be distinctly noticed.—

Nothing appears too great, sometimes, to be grasped by the conceits of self-importance; nothing too big for the stomach of vanity: and yet it is found that the Imagination refuses to yield itself, except for a moment, or in a very limited degree, to those excitements that are drawn from the solitary bosom of the individual. Man, much as he may boast himself, is by far too poor *at home* to maintain the expense of his own splendid conceptions of personal greatness. Not even when he revolves the vast idea of his immortality, is he able to accumulate the materials of sublimity, without looking abroad

and beyond himself, in search of objects fitted to quicken the emotions of greatness and dignity. And yet surely if any idea, purely selfish, had power to call up and sustain such emotions, the idea and the hope of endless existence might do so. But whenever we meditate upon eternity, and think of our own part in it, we dwell much more upon the scenes, the personages, and the events it shall connect us with, than conceive of ourselves, simply, as destined to live for ever. It is no wonder then if this same rule holds good, when nothing beyond the present scene of things is contemplated. We can hardly err in assigning the reason of a mechanism so remarkable.—If human nature had been so constituted as that the imaginative emotions could have found sufficient range within the lone precincts of the soul, and if there had been opened to every one (or at least to heroic spirits) a world of splendid illusions—such that he should have had no need to look abroad, man must have become, in a frightful sense, an insulated being; nor perhaps would any other impulse, drawn either from his wants, his fears, or his affections, have availed to connect him firmly and permanently with his fellows. No conception much more appalling can be entertained than that of a proud demigod, who, finding an expanse of greatness within his own bosom—an expanse wherein he could take ample sweep, and incessantly delight himself, should start off from the populous universe,

and dwell content in the centre of an eternal solitude!

It may well be assumed as probable that the Creator has granted to none of his rational family the prerogative of so fatal a sort of self-sufficiency. Assuredly no such power is granted to man. Even those instances that may seem the most nearly to approach the idea just now mentioned, do in fact, when accurately looked at, support the general principle. The man of the wilderness, for example, is still a social being, though in a very perverted manner; and we should find convincing proof of the fact if we could only listen to those often rehearsed and monotonous soliloquies of which the great world—its noise, its vanity, and its corruptions are the theme. Yes, he congratulates himself anew every day that mankind is far remote from his cell. But why can he not drop this reference altogether? Why not cease to think of what he does not see—does not feel? It is because the gloomy and vexed imagination of the solitary—spite of itself, can find none but the faintest excitements within its own circle, and so is driven to roam abroad in search of stimulants. The world, we may be assured, is as indispensable a material to the enthusiasm of the anchoret, as it is to that of the busiest and most ambitious votary of fame. Only let some breathless messenger—like those that brought tidings of dismay to the Arabian patriarch, reach

the cavern of the hermit, and announce to him that his love of solitude was at length effectively and for ever sealed by the utter extinction of the human race:—solitude, from that instant, would not merely lose all its fancied charms, but would become terrible and insufferable; and this man of seclusion, starting like a maniac from his wilderness, would run round the world, in search, if haply it might be, of some straggling survivors!

Nor is it a few foreign materials that are enough to give effect to the alliance of the imagination with the selfish principle. A vigorous enthusiasm must embrace a broad field. Thus patrician pride, and the arrogance of illustrious blood must not only go very far back, but stretch itself very widely too, before it can acquire the alacrity or the force that distinguishes imaginative sentiments. The pride of ancestry is a sullen grace, and has always about it an air akin to melancholy or depression. The enthusiasm of the very meanest member of a warrior-clan is tenfold more *animate* than that of the head of a house laden with the decorations of heraldry. In the former instance the imagination grasps the compass of the community of which the individual is a part: in the latter, one slender line, terminating in *self*, is all that engages the fancy; and it is in vain, with so attenuated an object only in view, that pride chides itself for its dull and sluggish movements. The Chief

must think of his *people* more than of his *ancestry*, if he would, on any special occasion, gain a powerful spring of action. In truth it is more as a Chief than as the offspring and representative of an illustrious stock, that the energetic patrician exults in his distinctions, and achieves deeds worthy of the name he bears.

Martial enthusiasm especially demands the social elements as its ground:—and here we reach that very compound sentiment which, as to its construction, stands immediately parallel with religious rancour and Fanaticism. The one species of ardent emotion differs from the other more in adjuncts and objects, than in innate quality or character. The battle-fury of the CLAN is only self-love, inflamed by hatred, and expanded, by aid of the imagination, over the width of the community with which the individual consorts. It is this envenomed enthusiasm that renders the CHIEF of the horde (as visible centre of all emotions) the object of a more zealous and efficient idolatry than is offered to the GOD of the horde: and it is this that lends a measure of nobility and importance to even the most abject son of the tribe. It is this feeling which knits the phalanx, shoulder to shoulder, when the marshalled family advances to meet its ancient rival in the field. It is this passion—the enthusiasm of gregarious rage, that puts contempt upon death, gives a brazen firmness to the nerves when torture is to be endured, seals the

lips in impenetrable secresy when a trust has to be preserved; and, in a word, imparts to human nature a terrible greatness which we are compelled at once to abhor and to admire.

What is the clangorous music of barbarous armies—what the rhapsodies of their poetry, but the modulated expressions of a ferocity which the imagination has already inflamed, ennobled, purified, and softened? Shall the frigid philosopher affirm that music and poetry are *incentives* to the destructive battle passions? It is true that they are; yet take away such incentives, and man is thrown back upon his mere malignity, and becomes more dreadful to his species than a tiger.

But the imagination has a limit beyond which it does not vigorously act. If it is not, as we have said, to be stimulated by ideas merely selfish, it becomes, on the other hand, languid, or ceases to exert an efficient influence over the passions, when the field of its exercise is very much extended. The men of a mighty empire that embraces many and various tribes, know little of the intense patriotism or of the unconquerable courage that distinguishes the heroes of a petty clan, or small community. Self, in this case cannot retain its hold of an aggregate so vast; and although the object be immensely greater, the motive is incomparably less than in the other instance. If it were not that general intelligence and a better knowledge of the science of

government, and more skill in war, ordinarily come in with extended empire to supply the place of personal enthusiasm, the history of nations would present (in a perpetual series) what in fact it has often presented—the destruction or subjugation of larger social bodies by the smaller. But thus is the great polity of mankind balanced:—men possess vastly more individual motive, and more spontaneous power, as members of a small than of a large community. Meanwhile the greater bodies have at command, not only a larger sum of physical force, but more knowledge, and principle, and order, than often exists in petty states. So it is that the small and the great coexist upon the same surface; and that the course of conquest has been alternate—in one age a fraction has broken up the mass—in another the mass has absorbed the fractions.

It may subserve our purpose to compare still more distinctly the steady martial temper that ordinarily belongs to the armies of a great empire, with the ferocious or desperate valour that distinguishes the warriors of a horde, a canton, or a petty republic. The first (extraordinary occasions excepted) is a calm perfunctory courage, drawing much more of its motive from usage, opinion, and reasons of interest or honour, than from the impulse of the malignant passions. An accomplished general of such an army excludes from his calculation of what may be effected by the tremendous engine which he

wields, the rage or the rancour of the individual combatants. But, on the contrary, this very *malus animus* constitutes the principal ingredient in the bravery of the clan; and it does so because the human mind readily admits, under these circumstances, of an exaltation, which, in the other case, nothing can produce short of the most unusual excitements. The irascible passions are not to be raised to a height unless self-love, in some form, is immediately engaged in a quarrel; but the vast interests of an empire, and the immensity of an army that covers a province, and that is never seen as a whole, are quite disproportioned to the share each individual may have in the public weal. And then, as every one of the sentiments that infuse generosity into the practice of war, draws much of its force from the imagination, they will of course exist in the greatest vigour where the imagination is the most wrought upon. There are however very few minds, or they are minds only of the largest capacity and of the finest conformation, that can derive the stimulants of a vigorous enthusiasm from the idea of an extensive empire. On the other hand, few minds are so insensitive as not to entertain a degree of such enthusiasm when the various emotions of patriotism and civil affection spring up from a space that may all be seen at once from the summit of a hill.

And it is on the very same principle, as we

shall find, that Fanaticism must attach itself always to a limited order of things, and is necessarily *factious*. What is fanaticism but rancorous Enthusiasm? And inasmuch as enthusiasm springs from the imagination, it must embrace a circle just wide enough to give it powerful impulse, and yet not too wide to exhaust its forces.

The valour of the clan not only stands *parallel* with religious fanaticism; that is to say, has one and the same Natural History, but is most often found in combination with it. The two classes of passion are so nearly allied that the one readily follows upon the other. The vehement patriotism of the horde or little free state puts the minds of men into a ferment that will not long fail to introduce the stirring conceptions of Invisible Power; and when so brought in, the two ingredients become intimately blended:—the civil and the religious frenzy form a compact sentiment of such vivacity as to carry human nature—if the solecism might be admitted, above and beyond the range of human agency. While the gods have been hovering over a field of carnage the intrepidity of men has risen to the audacity of immortals; and their ferocity has resembled the rage of fiends!

Although it may be true, and we confidently assume it to be so, that a beneficial mitigation and refinement of the grosser elements of our

nature accrues from their alliance with imaginative sentiments, yet it does by no means follow that such sentiments ought to supplant the genuine principles of morals, wherever these may take effect. No one would maintain such a doctrine in the abstract; nevertheless, when we turn to the real world, we find that true virtue and piety have always had to contend (and often with little success) against those splendid forms of excellence which are but vice in disguise, and which owe all their specious graces and fair colours to the admixture we are speaking of.

The unalterable maxims of rectitude, purity and mercy, such as we find them in the Scriptures, being well understood and firmly instated in their just authority, then indeed we may allow the imagination to take the part that belongs to it as the general cement—or as the common medium of the various ingredients of animal, social, and intellectual life. There meets us however a special difficulty in assigning its proper office to this faculty when it comes to mingle itself, as it readily does, with the malign emotions; and this embarrassment is much enhanced by those modes of feeling which are found to have got possession of every lettered people. How large a portion of the pleasurable excitement that attends the reading of history springs directly from the recommendations which vindictive or inexorable passions borrow from imaginative

emotions! Then in the world of fiction—dramatic or poetic, perhaps half of the power which such creations possess over the mind is attributable to the same cause. The moralist and the preacher (especially when he has to do with the educated classes) and if he would discharge his office without shewing favour to inveterate prejudices, finds that he has to loosen many of the most cherished associations of sentiment, and must denounce as purely evil very much that is passionately admired, and will be eagerly emulated.

To affirm in absolute and exclusive terms that the irascible passions ought in no case to be allowed to blend with the imagination, so as may fit them to enkindle emotions of pleasure or admiration, would be going very far, and might bring an argument into serious embarrassments. We stop short then of so stern a conclusion, and shall urge only this more general rule, that the principles of benevolence, and of forbearance, and meekness, and gentleness, and humility, as taught in the discourses of Christ, and as enforced by his apostles, should in all instances to which they are clearly applicable, be carried fully home, notwithstanding the repugnance of certain modes of feeling commonly honoured as generous and noble; and moreover that every one professing obedience to the Gospel should exercise an especial vigilance toward that entire class of sentiments over

which profane history, romance, poetry, and the drama, have shed a glory.

The time perhaps shall come—nay we devoutly expect it, when, by the universal diffusion of a sound and pure Ethics—the ethics of the Bible, no room shall be left, no need shall be felt for the chastening influence which hitherto the imagination has exerted over the ferocious dispositions of mankind. Yes, an age shall come, when the gods and heroes of history shall hasten to those shades of everlasting forgetfulness which have closed upon their patrons—the gods and heroes of mythology. In the same day the charm of fiction shall be dissolved, and the gaudiness of *false sentiment*, in all kinds, shall be looked at with the cold contempt which now we bestow upon the follies of *false worship*. Then too, the romance (as well practical as literary) of this nineteenth century shall be bound in the bundle that contains the decayed and childish fables of olden times, and both together shall be consigned, without heed or regret, to sheer oblivion.

The slow but sure progress of society brings with it many *substitutions* of this sort, in which a less rational principle of action gives way to one that is more so. At the present moment we occupy just that midway position which, while it allows us to gaze with idle curiosity upon the blood-stained stage of chivalry, and upon the

deluged field of lawless ambition, quite forbids that any such modes of conduct should find a place among us as living realities. We are too wise and virtuous to give indulgence to that to which we largely give our admiration! May not yet another step or two be taken on the path of reason, and then we shall cease even to admire that which we have long ceased to tolerate?

So already it has actually happened in relation to those malign and sanguinary religious excitements which a few centuries ago kindled entire communities, and inflamed kings and mendicants, nobles and serfs, priests and wantons, abstracted monks and the dissolute rabble, with one purpose of sacred ambition. Though we now peruse with wonder and curiosity the story (for example) of the Crusades, there are very few readers in the present day—perhaps hardly one, who can rouse up a sympathy with that vehement feeling which was the paramount motive of the enterprise. Only let us strip the history of the crusades of all its elements of martial and secular glory, and the simple *religious residue* — the proper fanaticism of the drama, would scarcely touch any modern imagination. How much more is this true of those horrid crusades of which the internal enemies of the Church of Rome have, at different times, been the victims! All feeling of alliance with the illusions that gave impulse to such abhorrent

intestine wars has (do we assume too much?) utterly passed away, nor could by any means be rekindled; and the two emotions of pity for the sufferers, and of detestation of the actors in the scenes of fratricide, are the only sentiments which the narrative can call up. Yet there was a time when men—born of women, and fashioned like ourselves—yes, and men softened by education, and not uninformed by Christianity—saints and doctors, delicate recluses, and unearthly contemplatists—men who slept only three hours in the twenty-four, and prayed six or ten—when such men gave all the passion of their souls, and all the eloquence of their lips, to the work of hunting thousands of their fellows, innocent and helpless, into the greedy fires of the Church!

Thus it appears that the very order of sentiment which once was allowed and lauded as magnanimous, and even divine, we have learned to regard as either purely ridiculous, or as abominable. A like reprobation inevitably awaits (if mankind is really advancing on the road of virtue) every mode of feeling which, being essentially malevolent, draws specious colours from the imagination. That which is true and just, in conduct and character, must at length supplant whatever, if stripped of its decorations, is loathsome or absurd. So certainly as the calm reason of Christianity spreads itself through the world, will the ground fall in beneath the gorgeous

but tottering edifice of spurious imaginative virtue. Let but the irresistible process go on a little further, and it will become as impracticable to uphold in credit the still extant opinion which admits of honour without justice or purity, and of magnanimity without benevolence, and of that thirst of glory which is sheer selfishness, as it would be now, after the mechanic arts have reached an unthought-of perfection, to keep in use the cumbrous hand-machines of the last century.

Much of the conventional law, and many of the usages of private life, and especially the unwritten code of international policy, have yet to undergo a revolution as great perhaps as that which makes the difference between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries. All the vices, and all the talents, and all the institutions interested in the preservation of corrupt practices may oppose the advance of this renovation; but nothing short of the overthrow of Christianity and of civilization can arrest its progress. Nature (we use the word in a religious sense) NATURE is here at work with her noiseless mighty hand:—whatever is spurious is marked already for oblivion, and moves on to its home.

SECTION IV.

FANATICISM THE OFFSPRING OF ENTHUSIASM; OR COMBINATION OF THE MALIGN EMOTIONS WITH SPURIOUS RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.

THE Imagination, when inflamed by anger, or envenomed by hatred, exerts a much more decisive influence over the active principles and the character of men than otherwise ever belongs to it. Or we might rather say, that, by the aid of those strenuous elements of our nature, imaginative sentiments extend their empire, and bring under their sway minds of a robust order which would never have yielded to any softer impulses. A thousand fanatics have run their course of mischief who would have spurned religious motives altogether in the simple form of enthusiasm. Rancour has been the true reason of their religion, and its rule and end.

And as the empire of spurious religious sentiments is greatly extended by their alliance with the malignant passions, so do they acquire, from the same quarter, far more energy than they

could boast in their simple state. A malign Enthusiasm carries human nature to the very extreme boundaries of emotion possible to man: nothing which the heart may know lies beyond the circle occupied by fanatical extravagance; and this circle of vehement sentiments includes many enormities of feeling or of conduct of which scarcely a sample is to be found in a country and in an age like our own.

In truth, little more than the trite surface of human nature meets the eye among a people like ourselves. Our theories and systems of morals hardly take account of upper and lower instances, while they are busied with what may be found in the mid region of mixed and moderate passions. Living as we do under the meridian of caution and mediocrity, history, when most faithful, often sounds like romance; or even if we give credit to its narrations, we regard its lessons as of little practical significance now, inasmuch as whatever is virulent or terrible has fallen, we think, from the usage of mankind.

It has become somewhat difficult even to place ourselves so far in sympathy with extreme emotions as is necessary for understanding them. In all things what is profound has given way to what is familiar; or what once was fact is now thought of only as fit subject for fiction. Men of the present age are care-worn much oftener than melancholy; merry or jovial, rather than joyous; sagacious or ingenious, more than

meditative; and so keenly attached to the passing moment, as to throw up their interest as well in the past as in the future. Order, custom, and utility, set bounds—and very narrow bounds, to all modes of conduct: the spirit of raillery quenches, or imposes a disguise upon whatever emotions are not trivial. It is not indeed to be regretted that the firm constitutions of society, in modern times, and its established notions, repress or confine so much as they do the profounder and more virulent impulses of the soul. But the fact of this change and improvement should always be kept in mind when the power of such emotions is to be calculated, or when conjecture is employed upon the possible events of another age. A free and equal government (and this is its praise) supersedes, nay almost extinguishes, the stronger passions. Private life, happily, is too secure, and public affairs are too well settled, to afford those sudden and extraordinary excitements which awaken the latent energies of men. It is despotism, plunging a ruthless hand into the bosom of domestic peace—it is ambition, immolating a thousand victims in an hour—it is popular fury, led on or repulsed by a single arm, that display the expansive force of the human mind when urged to the utmost excess of feeling.

Even those visible and natural excitements of the imagination, whence the deeper passions are wont to draw much of their vigour, are denied

to us. England has all the beauties of picture; but they are beauties in miniature. What we look upon around us is the scenery of poetry, rather than of tragedy. And it is a fact, if not constant, yet ordinary, that those portentous corruscations of the passions which ally themselves readily with the imagination, have burst out from the thick gloom of a frowning Nature. Such excesses have chiefly appeared where awful scenery, or extreme violences of climate have seemed well to comport with egregious sentiments and frenzied actions. Man (that is to say when once effectively roused to action) acts quite another part than we think of, if his lot be to roam through howling solitudes—to traverse boundless and burning sands—to hide himself among cloud-covered precipices—to gaze upon the unalterable and intolerable splendour of the sky;—if often he stand aghast amid the earthquake or the hurricane, or be overtaken by sultry tempests, fraught with suffocation. It is in the heart of forests that are the ancient domain of enormous reptiles, or of savage beasts —it is where horror and death lurk in the way, that the darker passions reach their fullest growth, and are to be seen in their proper force. All the principal or most characteristic forms of fanaticism have had their birth beneath sultry skies, and have thence spread into temperate climates by transportation, or infection.

No such rule must be assumed as absolute—

few rules that relate to human nature are so, but it is one as uniform as most, that where neither reason, nor the genuine affections, but imagination, acts as the prime impulse in religion, the malign emotions are found in close attendance, and seldom fail to convert spurious piety into an energetic rancour. Then again this rancour reacts upon the enthusiasm whence it sprang;—the child schools the parent (an inverted order of things not unusual where the progeny has much more vigour than the parent.) Enthusiasm, when it has come to sustain Fanaticism, is far more darkly coloured, is more profound, more mysterious, than the illusory piety that has no such load upon its shoulders. Things bright and fair, although unreal, are the chosen objects of this; but the other asks whatever is terrific and destructive. This sort of transmutation of sentiments, which happens when the enthusiast becomes the fanatic—when malignity is shed upon illusion, much resembles what often takes place in feverish sleep;—who has not seen in his dreams, splendid and smiling pageants, gradually relinquishing the brilliant colours they first showed, just as if the summer's sun were sinking from the skies;—but presently a murky glimmer half reveals menacing forms; and in the next moment some horrid and gory phantom starts forth, and becomes master of the scene!

The false religion then of the FANATIC includes elements not at all known to the mere Enthusiast;

and before we descend to the particular instances it will be advantageous to ascertain the general (if not universal) characteristics of the spurious malign Religion which animates his bosom;—they may be reduced to three capital articles; namely, 1st. A deference to MALIGNANT INVISIBLE POWER; 2d. The natural consequence of such a deference—rancorous contempt or detestation of the mass of mankind, as religiously cursed and abominable; and 3d. The belief of corrupt favouritism on the part of Invisible Powers, towards a sect or particular class of men; and this partiality is the antithesis of the relentless tyranny of which all other men are the objects.

I. We have named—A Deference, or religious regard to MALIGN INVISIBLE POWERS, whether Supreme or Subordinate, which will be found to enter, as primary ingredient, into every form of Fanaticism, ancient and modern, and may well be called its GERM.

To believe that evil has affected other races of rational agents besides the human, and that such depraved and malignant beings, though unseen, infringe in some manner upon the human system —is one thing: and it is a belief which reason admits, and revelation confirms: but either to impute in any sort, malignancy to the Supreme Power, or to make subordinate malignant powers the objects of deference, direct or indirect, or to grant to their agency the prime place among

religious notions, is quite another thing; and it is a perversion of this sort, more or less gross, and more or less apparent, which imparts force to every species of rancorous religious sentiment.

On a field like this the imagination, if it be troubled by a gloomy temper, or made turgid by fierce passions, and especially if it be saddened by actual sufferings, will never want scope or fail of excitements. Nothing less in fact than the hope which it is the prerogative of true religion to impart can bar the entrance of the mind into this realm of fear—a realm upon which mankind has in every age eagerly sought to make incursions. If we are to employ phrases in accordance with the facts which history presents, we are bound to affirm that the NATURAL RELIGION of man, is the fear and service of Malignant Powers. Gloomy superstition springs up involuntarily in the human mind, depraved as it is, and exposed to so many pains, wants, and cruelties, and liable withal to death. Man does not become religious by mere force of gratitude: the unnoticed benefits of every hour lead him not to the shrine of the Supreme Beneficence: it is danger and sorrow that drive him to the altar. The necessities and miseries of the animal frame—the confusion and misrule that prevail in the social system—the stifled sense of guilt in every bosom, and the boding of future punishment, as well as the hatreds which woe and oppression cherish,

are active and pungent elements, working in the soul with incomparably more force than belongs to the mild sentiments that may be engendered either by the spectacle of the order and beauty of the material world, or by the fruition of the common goods of life.

The theism of philosophers has never availed to counteract that natural tendency which draws on mankind to the worship of Evil Powers. Neither the ancient nor the modern systems of abstract philosophy have taken any strong hold of the spirits of men; and the failure has happened, not so much because such systems were too refined or too abstruse for vulgar apprehension; but because they have not made provision for the actual position of man in the present state. Sages have announced the Divine perfections, and there have stopped;—but to bring these perfections to bear, in any mode of effective relief, upon the guilt and sorrows of mankind, was a problem quite beyond their power. Let it be granted that philosophical theism may be true in some far distant upper sphere; but ON EARTH it serves to explain nothing; it assuages no trouble; it is no more applicable to the real occasions of life, than are the dreams of the poet. The sage and the poet must alike be looked upon as mere men of idleness and speculation;—their theories of the world—the one abstruse, the other gorgeous, ask to be carried back many ages, or carried forward as many,

before space can be found where they may be lodged. Stern experience indignantly or contemptuously rejects both.

Of all the *popular* modes which have been devised for counteracting the tendency of mankind to malign superstition, that embodied in the mythology of the people of Greece may claim to have been the most successful, as well as the most rich and splendid. This system of worship—not so much the work of design, as the spontaneous product of the national mind, avoided provoking the resentment of tortured hearts by giving a direct contradiction to gloomy surmises;—it did not *interdict* sanguinary superstition; but rather occupied beforehand the elements of terror, and worked them up as the materials of its supernatural machinery. No example can be adduced, from any other quarter, of so skilful a substitution of the sublime and beautiful for the terrific. Delicious intellectual voluptuousness, with poetry, and the drama, with painting, architecture and sculpture, as its ministers, got the start of the violent passions, and of natural terrors; and without insulting human woe (as philosophy does) and without giving licence to ferocious impulses, as was done by the oriental superstitions, it soothed every harsh feeling by the insinuating fascinations of melody, symmetry, and colour. The Grecian imaginative theology, after having preoccupied the human mind by its exquisite forms of ideal,

or visible and tangible beauty, gave audience to the more fierce and malign emotions in their subdued and tranquil hour: or it brought them over unconsciously to such a mood.—Orpheus was immortal in Greece, and always present in the temples to lull the angry or destructive desires of the rude populace.—The lion and the leopard are seen stalking along, if sullen, yet pacified, in the processions of revelry and joy.

The Malignant Powers had indeed their titles and images, and temples in Greece; but their tyranny was not permitted; and in accordance with this proscription the priestly order was denied the means of extending its power. Nothing dark or cruel was suffered, in a crude form, to irritate the minds of the people. Although Fanaticism could not be absolutely excluded from the land of beauty, it received there more effectual modifications than any where else—the very circle of pure and true religion excepted. Hesiod, Pindar, Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Apelles, Phidias, were in fact, though not in form, the Priests of the Grecian worship, and the doctors of its theology; and if they did not professedly teach religious truth, they yet disarmed religious error very much of its evil influence.

Historical justice demands that when the absurdities and the impurity of the Grecian polytheism (both indeed very gross) are spoken of,

its extraordinary influence in allaying the violence of fanaticism should be distinctly admitted. On this ground no other superstition of the nations can at all come into comparison with it. The same justice should moreover lead us to acknowledge—to acknowledge with bitter grief, that, in later times, the corruptions of the Jewish and Christian systems imparted a virulence to fanaticism, such as the contemporaries of Socrates and Plato would have shuddered to think of.—The arrogant misanthropy of the Jew—the relentless intolerance of the Mohammedan, and most of all, the insatiate bigotry of the Papist, were forms of evil, new to the world when they severally appeared, and gave an appearance of reason to the calumnies of philosophers, who affirmed that the western nations had discarded the ancient mythology to their cost.

II. The conceptions we form of the Divine Being, and our feelings toward our fellow men, are always dependent one upon the other. As well by natural influence, as by mere contagion of sentiments, a belief in malignant divinities, or an imputation of malevolence in any form, to the Supreme Being, brings with it the supposition that the mass of mankind, or at least that certain portions of mankind, are the objects and the victims of Divine malediction; and therefore may be, or ought to be, contemned, tormented, destroyed.

Is it theory only, or is it matter of history, that MALIGN THEOLOGY has invariably been followed at hand by intolerance, execrations, cruelties? Or whichever may have been precursor, the other has quickly come up. Nor is a simple association all, for the style of the theoretic error will be found to have comported with the character of the practical mischief. Thus it is that, as the belief in malevolent divinities, or the imputation of malevolence (under any disguise of abstract terms) to the Supreme Being, contradicts or distorts the genuine notion of sovereign and impartial JUSTICE, to the tribunal of which nothing is amenable but *crime*, so the correspondent feeling towards mankind which such a belief engenders, is not that of righteous disapprobation *on the score of moral offences;* but that of detestation or abhorrence, on the mysterious ground of ecclesiastical impurity. It is not as the transgressors of a holy law, but as the reprobate of Heaven, that men in particular, or that nations are to be shut out from the circle of our charities. The multitude or *herd* of mankind is spurned as abominable, much more than as guilty. And when once so grievous a perversion of feeling has taken place, then the whole of the force which belongs to our instinctive notions of retribution, or to our acquired belief of future judgment, is thrown into the channel of our sectarian aversions; and this force, like a mountain torrent, in so passing

from an open to a narrow bed, gains new impetuosity.—Ingenuous disapproval becomes covert rancour; virtuous indignation slides into implacable revenge; and acrid scorn completely excludes, not only all indulgence towards the frailty of men, but all compassion for their sorrows.

A sense of justice founded on genuine notions of the Divine character and government, does not carry the mind further than to a mournful acquiescence in the infliction of due punishment upon the guilty. But it is quite otherwise with that perverted feeling which, while it draws its animation from hatred, derives its swollen bulk from the imagination.—The imagination inflamed by malignity, respects no bounds in its demand of vengeance. The very essence of Justice, which is strictly to observe a *limit*, scandalizes the fanatic, who must heap terror upon terror, and still fails to satisfy his conception of what might be fitting, as the doom of the accursed objects of his contempt. There is in the human mind, when profoundly moved, a strange eagerness to reach the depths of the most appalling ideas;—or, shall we say, to tread the very lowest ground of the world of woe and horror. This *innominate* appetite finds its proper aliment when a Manichæan belief is turned wildly loose upon the field of human misery:—carnage, murder, slavery, torment, famine, pestilence, pining anguish;—or hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic fires, are all so many articles

in the creed of the malign being. Under the influence of this cavernous inspiration, Pity is thought of, not merely as contemptible, but as impious;—Justice is injustice, and leniency the greatest of crimes.—Are we here only giving point to a paragraph?—or has not history often and again verified such a description of the enormities which the human heart, badly informed, may entertain?*

III. But the Fanatic, inasmuch as he is an Enthusiast born, must take up yet another and a more sparkling element of character; and it is nothing else than the supposition of corrupt favouritism on the part of the deity he worships, toward himself and the faction of which he is a member. The Fanatic, and this we must keep in mind, is not a simple misanthrope, nor the creature of sheer hatred and cruelty:—he does not move like a venemous reptile lurking in a crevice, or winding silent through the grass; but soars in mid heaven as a fiery flying serpent, and looks down from on high upon whom he hates. Imaginative by temperament, his emotions are allied to hope and presumption, more closely than to fear and despondency: he firmly believes, therefore, in the favour of the supernal powers towards their faithful votaries; and in expectation of still more signal boons than yet he has received, offers

* A fit occasion will present itself for excluding any sinister inference which might be drawn from these allegations against the serious verities of Christianity.

himself to their service, as the unflinching champion of their interests on earth.

And besides, as we have already said, the imagination, when brought into play by self-love, must draw its excitements from a circle which it can embrace. It will then be a tribe, a sect, a faction, that affords a sphere to fanaticism; and the infuriate religionist, how unsocial soever in temper, is compelled to love *a few*, so that he may be able, in the strength of that partial feeling, to hate the many with full intensity.—The supposition of special favour towards ourselves, on the part of heaven, will corrupt and debilitate, or will purify and invigorate the heart, precisely according to the quality of the notions we entertain of the Divine character. The idea of personal regard and affection from Him who loves only what is good and pure like Himself, can never operate to impair the principles of the moral sense: nay, this very idea, when freed from illusions, imparts elevation to virtue, and makes the temper and conduct of man, on earth, to reflect the brightness of heaven. But on the contrary, theological notions, when sullied or distorted, vitiate in an extreme degree every sentiment of the deluded being who deems himself the darling of the skies. Let but such a pestilent doctrine be admitted as that the Divine favour is bestowed, not merely in disregard of virtue, but in contempt of it, and then religion,

with all its power, goes over to swell the torrent of impurity, cupidity, and malice. Under patronage of a belief like this, virtue and vice change sides in the court of conscience, and the latter claims sacred honours.

We recapitulate our three elements of Fanaticism, which (as we assume) will be discoverable, in different modes or proportions, under all forms of religious extravagance—namely—The supposition of malignity on the part of the object of religious worship;—a consequent detestation of mankind at large, as the subjects of Malignant Power;—and then a credulous conceit of the favour of Heaven, shewn to a few, in contempt of the rules of virtue.

Now we might follow the track of history, and exhibit the modifications these elements have undergone in the religious systems that have successively ruled in the world. But any method which observes the order of Time, though obvious and simple, is laden with the inconvenience of involving frequent repetitions of general principles. It will be better to seize upon certain leading varieties of our subject, as marked by broad distinctions, easily traced in every age, and such as may be recognized, whenever they may recur, without hazard of mistake. These conspicuous varieties may be brought under four designations, of which the first will comprehend all instances wherein malignant religious sentiments turn

inward upon the unhappy subject of them: to the second class will belong that more virulent sort of fanaticism which looks abroad for its victims: the third embraces the combination of intemperate religious zeal with military sentiments, or with national pride, and the love of power: to the fourth class must be reserved all instances of the more intellectual kind, and which stand connected with opinion and dogma. Our first sort then is Austere; the second Cruel; the third Ambitious; and the fourth Factious.

Or, for the purpose of fixing a characteristic mark upon each of our classes, as above-named, let it be permitted us to entitle them as follows—namely, the *first*, The Fanaticism of the SCOURGE; or of personal infliction: the *second*, the Fanaticism of the BRAND; or of immolation and cruelty: the *third*, the Fanaticism of the BANNER; or of ambition and conquest: and the *fourth*, the Fanaticism of the SYMBOL; or of creeds, dogmatism, and ecclesiastical virulence.

SECTION V.

FANATICISM OF THE SCOURGE.

THE broadest distinctions in the exterior character of men, and the most marked dissimilarities in their modes of conduct, do not infallibly bespeak a difference equally great in the elements of their temper. On the contrary, it is sometimes easy to trace in the minds of those between whose visible course of life there has been little or no resemblance, a close analogy. Yet even when such an analogy may be discerned, it is not always practicable to discover the causes of the external diversity which distinguishes them. An obscure peculiarity of the bodily temperament, or a forgotten incident of early life, may have been enough to determine whether certain impetuous passions should take their course abroad, or should boil as a vortex within the bosom. So is it that when a stream gushes from its cleft, the mere bend of a tree, or the angle of a rock, may be all the reason either of its taking its course westward—to measure the width of a continent;

or toward the east, soon to find a home in some pent-up gully, or sullen cavern of the mountains.

Causes so inconsiderable or so latent we must not hope always to detect. It will be enough if we can shew reason for bringing together into the same general class, men who would both perhaps have recoiled with horror or with disdain to find themselves in each other's company. Yes, we should all learn much of the secrets of our personal dispositions, and see our peculiar tempers as if under a sudden blaze of light, could it happen that some superior Intelligence, descending upon earth, were to do nothing more as Discriminator of character, and Censor of minds, than silently to classify the crowd of men by the rule of their original propensities, or their essential merits. — We should then read our hearts in the companions with whom we found ourselves assorted.

Why has the fanaticism of one man devastated the world; while that of another has spent itself within the walls of a cloister? we may not be able to say. Nevertheless there are instances of this sort which are easily explained. As for example:—violent or malign passions sometimes turn inward, and vex the heart that generates them, in consequence of the mere sluggishness or lassitude of the animal system which, while it insulates a man from others, as if he were enveloped in an indolent fog, yet does not much affect the interior of the character.

There may exist a very high rate of moral or intellectual excitement, where the manners and mode of conduct indicate nothing but torpor.—Just as, in some bottomless lakes, vehement under-currents or eddies make sport below, while the surface is still and stagnant. Not a few of our fanatics of the self-tormenting class come under this description.

There is too to be found, here and there, a pride of personal independence, and a misanthropic arrogance which, as it spurns every sort of mutuality, compels the soul to feed on its own substance. It might seem enough for such a one to refuse to draw its *satisfactions* from its fellows; but there is a malignant pride more excessive than this, and which even refuses to be so far dependent upon other men as to call them the objects of its hatred, or revenge.—There is a haughtiness so egregious that a man will contemn and torment himself, sooner than condescend to look abroad as if he stood in need of any beings as the objects of his ireful emotions. Although nature forbids that any such attempt at mental insulation should be altogether successful, yet the endeavour is made, and is renewed, day after day, by spirits of the order we describe. On the other hand, there are instances in which a mild meditative humour, perverted by some false system of belief, or excessive sensibilities that have chanced to be torn and outraged in the world, or much physical

timidity, combined with lofty and exquisite sentiments, produce the effect of introverting gloomy emotions upon the heart.

Instances of a mixed or mitigated kind present themselves on all sides. In truth the cases of *pure fanaticism* (our definition being kept in view*) are rare; or rather, are not readily separated from those dispositions with which it naturally consorts. Whether certain extravagant modes of conduct are to be attributed to sheer superstition; or whether there be nothing in them worse than an absurd enthusiasm, it may be impossible to affirm. The best we can do is to catch the distinctive features of each kind, as the ambiguous instances pass before us. Of all the facts which might be adduced (and they would soon fill volumes) illustrative of the system of monkish austerity, very few broadly and incontestibly exhibit the *virulent* motives which, nevertheless, the entire history of the system demonstrates to have been in secret operation throughout it. Especially is it to be observed, that the prevalence of a certain accredited and admired style of expressing the monkish doctrine conceals, or half conceals the passions that were working beneath the surface of its placid sanctity. No one who is conversant with the ascetic writers can have failed to discern the strong heavings of human nature under the pressure of that system, even when it might

be difficult or impossible to adduce formal proof of the hidden commotion. What we have now to do is broadly to characterise this species of fanaticism; — not such as it *seems* in the encomiastic pages of Theodoret, Sozomen, Isidore, Macarius, Palladius, Cassian; or of Basil and Bernard; but such as, after a candid perusal of these writers, we are compelled to believe it to have been.[1]

There are three distinct elements upon which fanatical sentiment, when introverted, employs itself; and in each instance the product is very distinguishable. These are, 1st. The miseries, physical and mental, to which man is liable. 2d. A consciousness of personal guilt, and dread of retribution. And, 3d. The supposition of supererogatory or vicarious merit. The working of the soul upon each of these excitements demands to be briefly exhibited.

1st. There is a rebellion of proud hearts against the calamities to which human life is exposed, such as impels sometimes the disordered mind to take up its burden of woe spontaneously, rather than wait till it be imposed.—"If pain sorrow and want are to be my companions, I vow to have none beside.—I will run forward

[1] The Author having in another volume considered the Monkish institute and doctrine as the product and parent of ENTHUSIASM, has now only to advert to those stronger features of the system which mark it as Fanatical or *virulent*.

and embrace wretchedness.—I will live for Misery, so that she may never overtake me, or set me as the mark of her arrow. Disappointment shall for me hold no shaft which I will not have wrenched from her cruel hand, ere it can be hurled. The power of bodily pain shall have no anguish in store which I will not freely have forestalled. Famine, thirst, heat and cold, shall assail me with no new lesson of distress.—No, for I will frequent their school. Every pang the flesh or the heart can feel, I will prevent by existing only for sorrow. Even that unknown futurity of evil which death may reveal, I will penetrate by continual meditation of horrors.—So will I daily converse with ghastly despair, as to taste beforehand the very worst, and to nullify fear by familiarity.' Modes of feeling such as this, have been indulged; and perhaps even now are not unknown to some. While we are looking only on the frivolous, the busy, and the sensual field of common life, as spread out around us, it may be hard to believe that the human mind has ever travelled on a path so deep-sunken. But if we turn aside a little from the beaten road, we shall find instances of this sort actually to belong to the history of man.

A desperate and sullen pride has always marked the oriental (polytheistic) austerities; and in India we see unmasked, that which in Europe has disguised itself under Christian modes of expression. Very little that offends against the

professed humility of the ascetic life is to be found on the pages of the writers who give us the principles and rules of the system, and who, for the most part, were themselves happy under it, as Enthusiasts. What might be the bitterness of the heart in those who were its victims, we are left to surmise. There were more motives than one for imposing perpetual silence upon the inmates of the monastery. The founder of the order, or its reformer, might talk aloud, and declaim as he would upon the felicity of his condition; for with him the fanaticism was of a sort that might be known and looked at; but not so with the fraternity at large. A de Rancé or a Eustache de Beaufort may speak:—but their companions must utter no whisper of their sorrows.[2]

[2] St. Bernard, intending no doubt to recommend the monastic state, pleasantly compares the monks to the fish in a puddle! "Sunt et in stagnis mundi pisces, qui in claustris Deo serviunt in spiritu et veritate. Meritò siquidem stagnis monasteria comparantur, ubi quodammodo incarcerati pisces evagandi non habeant libertatem." (*Serm. in Fest. S. Andr. Apost.*) And a horrid prison, according to his own confession, was the monastery: "*Duro* me *carceri* mancipavi." (*Epist.* 237.) So much so, that it seemed to the saint himself the greatest of all miracles that men should be found who were willing to endure its discipline. Let us hear him when, on a high day, he is haranguing the fraternity; "Quid mirabilius, &c. . . . . Quod majus miraculum, quando tot juvenes, tot adolescentes, tot nobiles, universi denique quos hic video, velut in carcere aperto tenentur sine vinculis, solo Dei timore confixi: quod in tanta perseverant afflictione pœnitentiæ, ultra virtutem humanam, supra naturam, contra consuetudinem?" (*Serm. in dedicat. eccles.*) A general fact, on the ground of which we may argue more confidently than from the disguised language of men whose enslaved spirits knew nothing of ingenuousness, is this, that as the monastic system sprung up amid the

2d. A proud forestalling of misery, such as we have just spoken of, ordinarily combines itself with the consciousness of guilt and the dread of retribution; and both together lead to the same voluntary endurance of extreme pains; he who thinks himself both a Victim and a Culprit would fain take the engine of retributive torment into his own hand, lest it should be laid hold of by the Vindictive Power he dreads. And the hope he entertains of acting always as proxy for the minister of Justice in his own case, bears proportion to the rigour with which he exercises the function of executioner.[3]

What spectacle in nature so monstrous, what, at first sight, so inexplicable, as that of an

persecutions of the second century, so has it flourished most, and been carried to the greatest extremes, in times of public calamity and disorder.—The miseries of the open world have been reflected upon the austerities of the cell—that camera obscura. It appears plainly that the excessive abstinences and the savage habits of the Egyptian eremites—so much admired by the Church writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, were little more than a fantastic form of the wretchedness of the people of the country. As much as this is confessed by some of the eulogists of these horrid saints. Thus for example Palladius.—As to what relates to eating and drinking (speaking of a certain Macarius and his companions) I need say little, since nothing like gluttony is to be found there, even among the most indulgent of the monks, who live at large; or any thing to distinguish them from the people of the country; and this as well by reason of the scarcity of food, as from the impulse of a Divine zeal—*καὶ διὰ τὴν σπανὴν τῶν χρειῶν, καὶ διὰ τὸν κατὰ θεὸν ζῆλον.—Lausaic Hist.* c. 21.

[3] Christian sentiments modify feelings of this sort, and give them a more humble guise. Ergo qui pœnitentiam agit, offere se debet ad pœnam, ut hîc puniatur à Domino, non ad supplicia æterna servetur: nec expectare tempus, sed occurrere divinæ indignationi. (*Ambrose in Ps.* xxxvii.) Do the apostles speak in any such style? The transition was easy from a doctrine like this to the extremest austerities.

excruciated devotee who scorns even to writhe or to sigh under tortures which other men would not endure an hour, to save or to obtain a mountain of gold! Yet he sustains, year after year, his burden of woe in the mere strength of the obduracy of his soul!—Bound to the stake;—yes, but bound only by the cords of pride! Does then a spectacle like this afford no lesson? After we have scoffed at the folly, or wondered at the infatuation of the voluntary sufferer, let us return and ask, whether so strange a perversion of the power of the spirit over the body, does not furnish evidence of an overthrown greatness in the human mind, such as the atheist and sceptic quite leave out of their theory of man? If it be said that these witless personal inflictions take place in consequence only of an error of belief, and may properly be compared to the ill-directed fatigues of a traveller who, on wrong information, pursues a worse road when he might have found a better, let only the experiment be tried of leading, into a parallel error, any being to whom the body and its welfare is the supreme and only interest to be cared for.—Not a step could ever be set by such a being towards a folly of this order. The liability of man to go so far astray springs from those ulterior principles that are involved in his nature, and which bespeak an immortal destiny. Every such practical absurdity is an implicit proof of

the presence of a latent capacity for entertaining the highest truths; and if man be the only fool among the tribes of earth, and the only wretch, it is because he alone might be wise, virtuous and happy.

On this ground the voluntary endurance of torment, from motives of religion, may be assumed, as demonstrative evidence of the intrinsic superiority of the mental over the animal principles of our nature; — for when the body prevails, as too often it does, over the mind, it is by the means of seductions and flatteries; and we know that in this manner the noble may readily be made to succumb beneath the base. But when, as in the instance before us, the mental force triumphs over the physical will, it does so in the way of an open trial of relative strength;—and the stronger principle is found to prevail. We receive, moreover, from these extraordinary facts, a striking proof of the supremacy of the MORAL SENSE in the constitution of man; for it is this chiefly that gives impulse to the practices of self-torture. And again, the relation of man to Invisible and Retributive Power is by the same means established; the secret of every sort of self-infliction is a tacit compromise with Future Justice; and when notions such as these take effect in a paramount manner, carrying all other reasons before them, we have evidence that, in the order of nature, Religion is the sovereign motive.

The fanatic is much in error; yet let it not be thought that he subverts the first principles of virtue.—He is wrong on certain points of morality, calling good evil and evil good; but still it is good and evil that are the elements he works upon. And so in religion.—His correspondence is with a Power of retributive Government on high; but he thinks amiss of that Power. His error is to impute an intrinsic malignancy, or a sheer vindictive purpose to the Invisible Authority; and then he conceives of himself as having, by his transgressions, fallen into the hands of the irresistible avenger, who, as he thinks, can take advantage of mankind only so far as sin brings them within the circle of his wrath; or who, once and again starts forth and catches an opportunity against men, when he finds them unwary or at fault.

In a form so preposterous as this, fanatical belief is hardly perhaps to be met with, except on the banks of the Ganges or in the wilds of Africa. We describe the feeling in its extremes, and then, in turning to instances where a purer creed has softened whatever is harsh, and where an accredited theological style has disguised whatever is offensive, we trace the elements of the very same order of feeling under the concealments that recommend them. We must not expect to hear from the Christian ascetic a genuine expression of the emotions that torment his bosom: these are to be divined

by a fair interpretation of his behaviour. It is by the same rule that we shall presently have to estimate the dispositions of those who have signalized themselves in scenes of cruelty. To read the extant writings—the epistles, the meditations, the homilies, of some of these sanguinary personages, one would think them unconscious of every thing but meekness and charity.

Dread or dismay, when of long continuance, naturally settles down into some sort of calculation or of compromise with the apprehended danger. And it is thus that there arises, within the troubled spirit of the man whose consciousness of guilt was at first intolerable, a whispered controversy with the vengeful Power, or a dull wrangling debate concerning the precise amount of the mulct, and the mode of payment. The culprit, confessing that he has fallen under the power of his adversary, nevertheless does not, after a while, despair of making terms more advantageous than at first he had thought of.—With this hope he looks about for the means of righting his cause, or even of quite turning the balance in his favour.—Yes, and he goes so far as to harbour the thought (natural to the mind when it is the prey of rancorous emotions) of justifying, to such an extent, the difference between himself and the Avenger, as that, if after all, punishment should be inflicted, it shall be, and shall seem to others—unrighteous and cruel, so that while writhing under it, the sufferer

may console himself with the proud consciousness of merit, and may, even on the ground of severe justice, gain a right of retaliation.

At this point then there comes in hope, and a new emotion, to give alacrity to the fortitude of the soul.—The conscience-stricken man discovers that he possesses within himself (as if it were an inexhaustible fund) the power of enduring privations and pains:—he may deny every gratification, he may sustain without a groan the most extreme anguish, he may live only to suffer. And in his mode of estimating the absolving value of bodily torment he reckons that, whatever price may be put upon those pains or wants which a man endures unwillingly, and from which he has no means of escaping, the merit of the same amount of affliction borne voluntarily, is tenfold greater.[4] Whoever then has the fortitude to inflict misery upon himself, may boldly defy vindictive Power; for he commands the means of adding merit to merit, at such a rate of rapid accumulation as shall presently outstrip the reckoning of the adversary.[5]

[4] Οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἀπορῶν τῶν ἀναγκαίων καρτερικὸς, ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν ἀφθονίᾳ τῆς ἀπολαύσεως 'γκαρτερῶν τοῖς δεινοῖς. So says Basil; and the sentiment might be put at the head of volumes of spurious morality.

[5] Not a few of those who peopled, first the deserts, and afterwards the monasteries, were such as the "Blessed" eremite whom Palladius describes (*Lausaic Hist.* c. 19.)—a homicide—we take his word for it that he was not a murderer, who, in terror of justice, and under horror of conscience—μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἰρηκὼς, καταλαμβάνει τὴν ἔρημον—where, unsheltered, he wandered, lost to all feeling three years;

Fanaticism (the fanaticism of personal infliction) is not *ripened* until it approaches this point. That is to say, it wants spring and warmth;—it is not tumid;—it has no heroism so long as mere dread, and the sense of guilt, are uppermost in the mind. But when pride takes its high standing upon the supposition of merit won, and when Invisible Powers are deemed to have been foiled, then the spirit gets freedom and soars.—Pitiable triumph of the lacerated heart that thus vaunts itself in miseries as useless as they are horrid! — Must we not mourn the infatuations of our nature, as we watch the ascent of the soul that climbs the sky only to carry there a sullen defiance of Eternal Justice! — So the bird of prey, beat off from the fold, and torn with the shepherd's shafts — its plumage ruffled, and stained with gore, flaps the wing on high, and fronts the sun as if to boast before heaven of its audacity and its wounds!

It is after it has passed this stage, or when

but afterwards built for himself a cell, and acquired celebrity as an eminent practitioner of austerities. I wished to know from him, says our author, with what feeling he now regarded the fatal act that had driven him into solitude:—he replied, that, far from thinking of it with regret, it was a ground of thanksgiving—*γεγένηται γὰρ μοί φησιν ὑπόθεσις σωτηρίας ὁ ἀκούσιος φόνος*. The profession is susceptible of a good meaning, and charity requires that we should so receive it. Nothing indeed would be more outrageous than to deny universally the piety and sincerity of even the most extravagant class of the anchorets. Better speak on such subjects like Alban Butler than like Gibbon.

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fear and humiliation give way to hope, to pride, or perhaps to revenge, that secondary motives are brought in, and fanaticism becomes a mixed sentiment, and is lowered in its tone; not seldom degenerates into farce or hypocrisy, and at length perhaps quite evaporates. Secondary motives of this kind would never be listened to if it were not for the alleviations that arise from habit. The pains of mere privation, terrible as they seem to the luxurious, the human mind soon learns to endure without repining; nay, it derives at length a sombre satisfaction from the very paucity of its sources of comfort. A reaction, such as this, is not of rare occurrence.—Certain tempers are alive to an emotion of personal independence which, when fully kindled, makes it delicious to a man to find that, in comparison with those around him, he is free from solicitude, because free from wants;—that a mere morsel of the coarsest food is all he is compelled to ask from the grudging world; and that the thraldom of artificial life is a bondage he has broken.[6]

The habitude of positive pain, as well as that of mere privation, brings too its relief:—there is

[6] To a naked eremite St. Bernard, pro signo caritatis, sent a cloak and boots, which he kindly received, and, as an act of humility and obedience, put on; yet presently, like a true New Zealander, laid aside as intolerable. Et nunc, said he, pro amore ipsius, vestimenta transmissa obedienter accepi, et indui; *diutius tamen ea portare non valeo,* quia nec opus est mihi; nec ipse mandavit. Dico autem vobis, amicis meis carissimis, quia nihil est mihi molestius quàm ut curæ carnis sarcinam odiosam, cum tanta difficultate depositam, lassatis et dolentibus humeris denuo imponere cogar.

a torpor partly of the nerve, but chiefly of the mind, which more and more blunts physical sensibility;—and there is an art learned in the school of chronic suffering, which teaches so to shift the burden of anguish as that it may not any where gall to the quick. Moreover there is a power of abstraction from bodily sensations which long experience calls into exercise, and which may at length (even while matter and mind continue partners) almost set the conscious principle at large from its sympathy with mere flesh and nerve. Pain, at its first onset, condenses the soul upon a point; or brings the whole of the sensitive faculty to the one centre of anguish: but habit of pain loosens this concentration, and allows the mind to occupy a wider surface.

The eulogists of the ascetic saints boast often of the absolute insensibility to pain, to thirst, and to hunger, which some of their heroes had attained to. In certain instances the leathern girdle—zona pellicea, hoc est, ex crudo corio—ad macerationem procurandam — was found, after death, to have lodged itself (shall we say as a seton?) in the integuments around the loins; so as (in ordinary cases) to have occasioned intense suffering: yet never had the secret been betrayed to the fraternity by any indications of uneasiness. Instances still more extreme, and far too revolting to describe, abound in the monkish records. If the facts are admitted as true, and they cannot altogether be

rejected, it must be believed that a state of extreme mental abstraction not merely diverts the *sense* of pain; but prevents also that physical excitement which ordinarily attends excruciating torture, and which wastes the animal force. We must attribute to the same influence of the mind the power acquired by some of the hermits of northern Europe to resist the most intense cold—unclothed and unsheltered. The instances are numerous, and are too familiarly spoken of to be reasonably called in question. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the forests of France and Germany were haunted by naked anchorets who, round the year, roamed about, refusing even the comforts of a cavern, and were wont to repose at night on the fresh fallen snow.[7]

[7] After deducting from these narratives all the miracles, the bare fact is miracle enough. These stories could not have been sheer inventions. It is difficult to choose among the abundance of examples;—and so much the more difficult, because it is hard to find one in which the venerable language of Holy Scripture is not frightfully misapplied to the follies of superstition. The author of the Book *de Miraculis Cisterciensium Monachorum,* thus speaks of one who, pro Christo quotidie moriens, non unam tantum, sed innumeras cruces et mortes sustinuit: quia quot diebus in eremo vixit, quasi tot martyria duxit. . . . . Annis siquidem quatuor decem solivagus ac toto corpore nudus, montibus et silvis pro Christo amore oberrans et latitans perduravit, cœlum habens pro tecto, aërem pro vestimento, pecorinum victum pro cibo humano. Ten years, without flinching from his purpose, the hermit lived abroad; but at length yielded a little to the weakness of nature. Postmodum autem quatuor fere annis ante suam dormitionem, in corde hyemis, bruma sæviente asperrima, cum tellus, nivibus obruta, et gelu acriore coercita, nec herbas foris exsereret, nec radices effodi sineret; tunc à facie famis et hujus frigoris sustinere non prævalens, tandem ut homo jam fere præmortuus, obeso corpore, pelle sola circumdatus, cogebatur interdum deserta deserere, atque ad proxima rura, volendo nolendo, descendere.

When so much proficiency as this has been made by the voluntary sufferer, he gains leisure to look abroad. Conqueror, so far, of himself—of nature, and of the vindictive powers, the fanatic stalks about as a hero, and may even begin to think how he shall turn his victory to profitable account.—Vanity and ambition, when once they gain a lodgement in the heart, imperceptibly, yet quickly sap more imaginative and passionate emotions. This substitution of ignoble sentiments for those of a deeper sort meets us every day. In truth the constant tendency or gravitation of the human mind is from the more to the less vehement class of emotions; and then its progress is from the simple and ardent, to the complex and turbid, in its habits of feeling. It is thus that the sincere enthusiast so often becomes (perhaps unconsciously to himself) a religious knave; and thus too, that the man who commenced his course of mortification and extravagance under the impulse of genuine passions, and who, at the outset, might have been looked at with wonder, if not admiration, degenerates into the charlatan or public fool.

3d. It is not till after the fanatic has acquired some familiarity with self-inflicted torments, and is at ease in his character of voluntary martyr, and especially until he believes himself to have reached a vantage ground in relation to Vindictive Powers, that he entertains the bold ambition

of undertaking to suffer vicariously for those who may be less resolute than himself.[8]

Master of a fund of supererogatory merit—how shall he dispose of it to best advantage? Can any thing be more noble than to dispense the hardly-acquired treasure among feeble souls, who are quite destitute of that in which he is rich? Absurdities such as this if not now

[8] We pass by, as uninstructive, the gross examples of this kind of fanaticism which might be brought from India or Thibet, and rather adduce instances which, though milder in appearance, may well amaze us more. Let us listen to St. Bernard: Videtur quidem et in nostris aliquando tribulationibus esse NONNULLA LIBERTAS, cum videlicet *pro peccatis proximorum*, libera et liberali caritate, laborem pœnitentiæ sustinemus, lugentes pro eis, jejunantes pro eis, *vapulantes pro eis*, et quæ non rapuimus exsolventes.—(*De Diversis, Serm.* 34, c. 3.) Yet the pious and respectable abbot of Clairvaux was not the inventor of this doctrine; nor, on the other hand, had it reached its maturity in his time; indeed his own language is often irreconcileable with the preposterous notion of supererogatory merit. Ubi ergo macula propria, propria quoque purgatio jure requiretur, says he; but in the very same sermon (*de Diversis*, 38) he leaves room for the then nascent error.—Per multas enim tribulationes in regnum Dei intrare necesse est; et nemo nisi per tribulationes ingreditur, *aut proprias, aut alienas*. An indistinct belief of a transferable merit in the good works and voluntary penances of the saints, is to be traced in many of the Christian writers from the fourth century and onward. Sed quid mirum, says St. Gregory (Pope) si ad absolutionem peccatoris propria merita suffragantur, quando in sacri eloquii auctoritate discamus, quia alii pro aliis liberati sunt?—(*In I. Regum*, c. 14.) And Ambrose, (*de Pœnit.* lib. i. c. 15.) . . . . Ut per universos ea quæ superflua sunt in aliquo pœnitentiam agente virilis misericordiæ aut compassionis velut collativa quadam admixtione purgentur. Or again (*Expos. Luc.* c. 5.) Si gravium peccatorum diffidis veniam, adhibe precatores, adhibe Ecclesiam quæ pro te precetur, cujus contemplatione quod tibi Dominus negare posset, ignoscat. The task is unpleasing and invidious to gather proofs of fatal error from the pages of writers who, taken altogether, are worthy of respect—often of admiration. We stop short then with the specimens above adduced.

common, nevertheless have in past ages often prevailed, and are only what may be looked for if we calculate the influence of certain motives upon the common principles of human nature. That law of our mental conformation has already been adverted to which makes it highly difficult, or quite impracticable, to kindle the imagination within the home-circle of selfish interests. The fanatic, therefore, all whose sentiments are more or less dependent upon that faculty, very soon feels a need—a craving, which not even the most egregious illusions of self-love can satisfy. He must then spread himself over a larger surface, and take up many more elements of emotion. Every mind, and especially a mind highly sensitive, seeks some object of meditation the dimensions of which it does not exactly measure. In moments of depression, in hours of languor, we want a defence against the chilling calculations of mere reason. And the more a man's course of life is substantially absurd, the more urgent need has he of a store of vague unlimited motives, such as shall be in no danger of an assault from common sense. When the fanatic has began to tire on his wearisome pilgrimage of woe, how may he reanimate his purpose if he can think himself a public person who has freely become responsible for other men's salvation; and especially if he can believe that the Vindictive Powers whom he is holding at bay with a strong arm, are watching for the fall

of so notable a champion, and would rush upon the spoil were he to faint!

And besides; it is only by heading-up the merit of penance to such a height as that there shall always be a large amount in store, that the public martyr can feel to be himself quite secure against the demands of justice. — May not a man who is every day expiating the sins of others assume it as certain that his own are discharged?—Thus the warfare against ghostly exactors is carried on upon advanced ground; and the knight-spiritual has a space in the rear to which, if pressed, he may retreat.

A contrast, curious at least, and perhaps instructive, presents itself, when we bring into comparison the Mohammedan and Popish superstitions, on the ground of the encouragement they have severally given to the practice of voluntary inflictions. Now it appears that, while the former has not been exempt from extravagances of this order, they have always constituted a main element of the latter; the Romish polity and doctrine having both broadly rested upon the principle (variously applied) of personal austerity. More causes than can be soon enumerated have concurred to produce this marked difference between the religions of Asia and of Europe.—The oriental faith burst upon the world, full-orbed, among an energetic

and enterprising race. It was the religion of MEN, and the faith of warriors. But the faith of the West was the slow-born creature of the cloister—the religion of recluses and of priests;—the child of sour and mopish imbecility. The one was modelled in the youthful season of national existence; the other during a course of melancholy ages which saw the human mind fall back from the high position it once had occupied, to the point of extreme depression.

Yet a somewhat different doctrine of penitential infliction has sprung from intellectual and moral degradation in the instance of the Jewish people. Nothing can be much more absurd or ludicrous than the Rabbinical penances. It is hard to believe that the mortification, the abstinence, or the punishment, was ever thought of either by those who issued the injunction or by those who listened to it, otherwise than as an acknowledged mockery. The modern children of Abraham, suffering as they have done in almost every age, and in every country, substantial miseries which might be well reckoned to supersede any voluntary pains, and yet not deeming their theology complete without penances, have taken care to impose upon themselves such only as were too severe to be put in practice, or such as were penal only in name. Besides; the Rabbinical Judaism, with its lumber of frivolous traditions, has left no room for the working of those profounder sen-

timents whence the monkish austerities drew their motive. The religion of the modern Jew, what is it but a ponderous vanity, under the pressure of which the human bosom may hardly heave? — that bundle of beggarly elements which he bears about upon his shoulders, allows him not the liberty of emotion which men of other creeds enjoy, and which the fanatic of any creed must possess.[9]

[9] Maimonides saw in Egypt enough of the follies and horrors of monkery to sicken him of austerities. On this subject he speaks like a man of sense, and in a strain of which, alas, we find few instances among the Christian writers of the time. He condemns as positively sinful, all voluntary inflictions, not directly enjoined by the law (see *Bernard's Selections from the Yad Hachazakah,* p. 170, and the entire chapter). The doctrine of Repentance, as we find it in this writer, might with advantage to the Jew be compared with the Romish doctrine on the same point, from the age of Pope Gregory I. to the present day. His rule of confession (p. 222) is incomparably more sound than that of the doctors of the church. But Maimonides must not be taken as a sample of Rabbinical instruction: — he boldly appealed to Moses and the prophets.—The Rabbis issued nothing which they did not first deform and render absurd. Qui, &c. . . . . diebusque æstivis accedat ad locum plenum formicarum, inter quas nudus sedeat. Diebus vero hybernis, frangat glaciem, et in aquis sedeat usque ad nares. Qui, &c. . . . . sedeatque in aquis diebus hybernis, quantum temporis requiritur ad coquendum ovum. Qui, &c. . . . . jejunet quadraginta dies continuos, atque singulis diebus vapulet bis, aut ter. Qui, &c. . . . . sedeat in nive et gelu per horam unam singulis diebus; sic faciat per totam hyemem quotidie semel, aut bis. Diebus vero æstivis objiciat se muscis, sive vespis et apibus; aliosve pœnas subeat morti similes. That these penances were matters of form only one might infer from the fact that a forty days' fast is enjoined upon whosoever exacts usury (interest) and that the taking of interest even from the Gentiles is reprobated. See the book called *Reschit Cochma,* as quoted by the annotator in Raimond Martin's *Pugio Fidei.* It is curious to observe that the practice of penance has never comported with the sentiments and habits of a trading people

But to return to Mohammed, and to mention specific causes, it must be noted that the Arabian teacher, by means of his prime doctrine of the merit of military service undertaken for the propagation of the true faith, and by the large and attractive rewards promised to pious valour, appropriated, to the enterprises of active life, all those springs of action which, when left to pend upon the conscience, impel men to inflict upon themselves expiatory torments. Beings of the very same native temperament who, in Christian countries, clad themselves in hair-cloth, and mercilessly twanged the scourge over their own shoulders, put on, in the East, the caparison of war, and wielded the cimeter, and this because the Koran offers paradise to those who die in battle.[10]

A subsidiary means of diverting the fanaticism of personal austerity was also the importance attached by Mohammed to alms-giving—almost the only positive virtue of his system. The

[10] Verily God hath purchased of the true believers their souls and their substance, promising them the enjoyment of paradise, on condition that they fight for the cause of God; whether they slay or be slain, the promise for the same is assuredly due by the law, the gospel, and the Koran. And who performeth his contract more faithfully than God? When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads until ye have made a great slaughter among them, and bind them in bonds. . . . . And as to those who fight in defence of God's true religion, God will not suffer their works to perish: he will guide them and will dispose their heart aright, and he will lead them into paradise, of which he hath told them. (*Sale's Koran*, c. 9 and 27.) We shall presently find occasion to match these passages with some of similar import from other quarters.

aspirant to immortal sensualities could not indeed every day wet his sword in the blood of infidels; but he might at all times *purchase*, if not always *conquer* for himself the future pleasures. Or if the system still seemed to want a vent for those feelings which give rise to ascetic practices, it was found in the rigour and universal obligation of the annual fast, which afforded to every Moslem such a taste of mortification as might effectively cool the ambition of voluntary hunger.—The frantic austerities of the Dervish did not spring out of the Mohammedan theology; but either grew upon it; or have been merely farcical and mercenary; or have been practised in continuation of idolatrous usages which the faith of the Prophet did not extirpate.[11]

The Romish Superstition embraced many more elements of meditative emotion, and those of a more profound sort than were included in the Koran. Although, if we are to speak of it as a whole, and especially if we have in view its condition in the eighth and ninth centuries, Popery was a more corrupt system than that of the Arabian

[11] Sooffeeism, with its varieties, is a far more ancient and a more widely spread system than the doctrine of the prophet. The philosophic pantheist of Persia and Upper India, the frantic fakir, and the dervish, are personages of all times, and of almost all countries. The ascetic tribe is older than history, and presents the same general features wherever we meet with it. In reading Arrian's account of the Bramins, or Sophists, as he calls them, of India, one might believe he was describing so many Romish saints. Οὗ τοι γυμνοὶ διαιτῶνται οἱ σοφισταὶ (*Indian Hist.*). The Koran neither created nor cherished infatuations of this kind.

prophet, so that Mohammed and the Caliphs may almost claim the praise of religious Reformers; yet did it retain those potent principles of hope and fear—of remorse and compunction, of tenderness too, and of keen sensibility, which put the soul into deep commotion, and set it working upon itself. On the contrary, Mohammed, by strangely admitting into his theology the expectation of a sensual paradise, the pleasures of which were not to differ in substance from the delights of an oriental palace, effectively cashiered from his system every pure and spiritual conception of virtue.[12] For if the heaven which a man is thinking of as his last home be grossly voluptuous, of what avail will be fine abstract axioms or grave discourses to teach him purity?

No perversion such as this ever gained ground among Christian nations, even in their lowest state of religious degradation. And as some spiritual conceptions of the Divine character, as well as some just notions of the sanctity of the upper world were generally prevalent, the correspondent belief of the guilt and danger of man as a sinner retained its force. Nevertheless as, at the same time, the genuine and evangelic scheme

[12] The contemplative or more refined class of Moslems have strenuously endeavoured to put a figurative construction upon those passages of the Koran which describe Paradise, and have maintained that the prophet never intended to be literally understood. The mass of his followers have taken things as they found them.

of remission of sins was nullified, or quite forgotten, the tormented conscience was left to contend as it could with the dread of future retribution.

The doctrine of Purgatory sprang up naturally in the bosoms of men from this mortal conflict of fear and conscious guilt, with the obscure hope of impunity; and although the "fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture," may be traced in its elements to very early times, and although it became at length, in its practical bearing, a device well adapted to serve the purposes of a rapacious priesthood, it should be regarded, in its essence, as nothing more than the proper product of elevated and spiritual notions of virtue, cut off from that solace which the Gospel affords. Some opinion equivalent to the doctrine of purgatory, has been seen, even in our own times, to be associated with the two conditions, namely—a damaged Gospel, and a severe morality.

It belongs to another subject, namely SUPERSTITION, to trace the origin and growth of the doctrine of Purgatory. This ancient and widely-diffused dogma went hand in hand with that which led to the invocation of saints, and the belief of their efficient intercession in the court of heaven. The latter doctrine seems to have been ripened, or to have reached a definite form

rather earlier than the former; nor is the mode of its birth quite so obscure. When at length both had become the accredited doctrine of the church, a brisk commerce between the visible and invisible worlds was carried on, and in this traffic the clergy were the brokers and the gainers—the gainers to an incalculable amount.[13]

[13] Not only the doctrine of Purgatory, but the practical abuses of it, stand forth almost in the grossest form in the writings of Gregory the Great; and it would be really hard to choose between the faith of the Christian Pope, on this subject, and that of his contemporary—Mohammed;—both announcing eternal damnation as the doom of the uninstructed mass of mankind; and both preaching a purgatorial state to those whose religious advantages were of the highest kind. Assuredly the Koran is more free from suspicion of a sinister purpose on this point than are the Dialogues of Gregory:—if indeed these dialogues can be trusted to as the *unaltered* productions of the writer to whom they are attributed;—or are his productions at all—a point deemed questionable.

A service perhaps might be rendered to sincere and candid Romanists if the history of this doctrine—a capital article in his belief, and one which he knows to be of high antiquity, could be satisfactorily traced. Our materials, it is to be feared, are too scanty to sustain the inquiry; for between the close of the apostolic age and the time of Cyprian or Tertullian, more is wanted than actually exists to enable us to give a good account of the state of the opinion as we find it in the pages of those two writers. The expression, so often quoted by the Romanists, from Tertullian, — Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis annua die facimus *(de Corona)* is not of itself conclusive; but becomes so as compared with other passages. Dic mihi soror, in pace præmisisti virum tuum? Quid respondebit? An in discordia? Ergo hoc magis ei vincta est, cum quo habet apud Deum causam. . . . . Enimvero et pro anima ejus orat, et refrigerium interim adpostulat ei, et in prima resurrectione consortium, et offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus. *(De Monogam.)* Every one has seen quotations to the same effect from Cyprian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Cyril of Jerusalem. But in these, and similar instances, the true import of certain phrases is to be gathered from each writer's general strain on those topics which are most nearly allied to the opinion in question: especially on the subject of repentance and remission of sins. The

The idea of future expiatory torments having lodged itself firmly in all serious and devout minds, no other consequence could be looked for but the practice of penitentiary inflictions, having for their motive the hope of abating the demands of justice in the region of chastisement. The most excessive abstinence, a shirt of hair-cloth, a bed of straw, continued watchings, perpetual silence, sanguinary flagellations, and positive tortures, were willingly resorted to as assuagements of the dread which the belief of purgatory inspired; and if we are to wonder at all in looking at these severities, our amazement must be, not that men could be found who were willing to submit heartily and permanently to the rule of St. Benedict, or St. Dominic; but rather that the miseries of the monastic life were not carried to a much greater extent than we actually find them ordinarily to have reached. It would not have seemed strange if sincere believers in the doctrine of purgatory had gone the length of the ancient worshippers of Baal, or of the modern devotees of Indian divinities.[14]

doctrine of purgatory, it is pretty evident, sprang out of an early corruption of those principal articles. Here we find a confusion of notions, and a perverted exposition of Scripture, in almost the earliest of the Christian writers.

[14] The Romish writers use no reserve in describing the pains of the purgatorial state; and as they have, in the doctrine itself, supplied to the Church an article on which Scripture is silent; so, in furnishing the particulars, have they drawn largely upon that special knowledge of the infernal regions which their privileged commerce with invisibles has supplied. "A soul," says the Rev. Alban Butler, "for

It is in the glare of a doctrine such as this that we should peruse the rules of the ascetic life, and the blood-stained story of the monastery. Is it any wonder that men who first had tortured themselves at the instigation of this belief should think it a light matter to ply the rack and the brand upon others?—The fanaticism of austerity was proper parent of the fanaticism of cruelty. But the mild and meditative spirit of Christianity happily came in to moderate, in some degree, that extravagance into which the human mind naturally runs when highly excited by a ferocious theology.—The Christian flagellist might, it is probable, draw as much blood from his back in a year, as did the frantic priest of Moloch from his sides and arms;—or perhaps more; but yet it were better done with the Scourge than with the Knife. The Romish fanaticism did not rise to a horrid and murderous pitch until after it had become the instrument of sacerdotal rancour, and had been directed against the heretic.

The derivation of fanatical cruelty from fanatical austerity it is by no means difficult to trace: nor is the line of descent far extended.

one venial sin shall suffer more than all the pains of distempers, the most violent colics, gout, and stone, joined in complication; more than all the most cruel torments undergone by malefactors, or invented by the most barbarous tyrants; more than all the tortures of the martyrs summed up together. This is the idea which the fathers give us of purgatory, and how long many souls may have to suffer there we know not."—*Lives of the Saints*, Novem. 2.

Often indeed has the one generated the other in the same bosom; or if the history of the Church is looked to it will be seen that, within the circuit of a century, or more, those outrages upon human nature which had been going on in the cells of the monastery, and those preposterous sentiments which the ascetic life enkindled, reached their proper consummation when the friar and the inquisitor took in hand to rid the Church of her enemies. Far was any such consequence from the minds of the early and illustrious promoters of the monastic system: but though not foreseen by them, it demands to be attentively regarded by us, since the instruction which history conveys is drawn from considering, rather the commencements than the issues, rather the germs than the fruits, of whatever excites admiration or surprise upon the stage of the world's affairs.

And so, if it be intended to receive in the most efficacious manner those lessons of practical wisdom which spring from the contemplation of individual character, we must select as specimens, not the most distorted instances; but those rather wherein the peculiar tendency we have in view is moderated by fine qualities of the heart, or lost almost amid the splendour of rare mental powers and accomplishments. For inasmuch as it is only when so recommended that spurious virtues produce extensive ill effects, our caution against the evil should be

drawn from examples of that very order. Let the sardonic historian, whose rule it is to exhibit human nature always as an object of mockery, crowd his pages with whatever is most preposterous in its kind.—A better motive will lead us to bring forward the worthiest exemplars; and yet not as if the illustrious dead were to be exhibited that it might be said of them — How little were the great! but rather that the admonition, of whatever kind, which the instance presents may come with the fullest force.

Forgetting then the frenzied anchorets of the Egyptian deserts, of the rocks of Sinai, and of the solitudes of Syria, and leaving unnamed the savage heroes of the Romish calendar,[15] let us

[15] No literary enterprise can well be named, or perhaps thought of, more undesirable—more humiliating—at least if a man retains any feeling of self-respect, than that which the worthy and learned author of the Lives of the Saints has executed.—The Romish Church is rich in the boast of upwards of a thousand saints—a number so large that she is able to allot as many as three or four glorious patrons, on an average, to each day of the year! Now most men would think it a formidable task to undertake merely a cold apology of *every one* of any thousand frail human beings that could be brought together in a list. But what must it be, not simply to excuse, but to commend every one of a thousand? And what, not only to commend but to find proof that every one is a fit object of adoration, and an efficacious mediator between God and man! Yet such is the achievement that signalizes the name of Alban Butler! A thousand saints, one after another, to be hoisted upon the pedestal of canonization, or defended there! Truly one of the loftiest of these enviable standing places should be reserved for the author himself! Those who, without a cause to serve, or a Church to prop (or to pull down) look calmly at human nature as it is, and who read history for themselves, will, with a sort of mournful contempt bring into comparison the foolish

take an instance in which a due admiration of great qualities must mingle with our reprobation of mischievous sentiments. Instead of a St. Symeon, or a St. Columban, we turn to Basil—the primate of Cappadocia.[16]

But how obtain the simple and living truth in the instance we have chosen? Nothing belonging to that age in which the Church ascended to the place of worldly greatness is to be found in its native form and real colours. Flattery and clerical arrogance confound all distinctions, violate all modesty, and in the interested idolatry of human excellence, commit frightful outrages upon the just rules of piety. Those calumniators of his friend and patron against whom Gregory Nazianzen inveighs,[17] could not have injured the true fame of Basil so fatally as himself has done by his hyperbolic encomiums. We turn as well with suspicion as disgust from

exaggerations of Butler on the one hand, and the malign misrepresentations of Gibbon on the other; and will learn to hold very cheap, as well eulogists as calumniators, when it is Truth we are in search of.

[16] Let ninety-nine of every hundred of the Saints of the Calendar retain their title. If the Romanists please, it shall be *Saint* George, *Saint* Dunstan, *Saint* Dominic, and so forth; but we are disposed to withhold the sullied honour from the few whom we believe, notwithstanding the misfortune of their canonization, to have been good and honest men, and sincere Christians. And certainly we so think of Basil of Cappadocia. He governed the churches of that province rather more than eight years, during the reigns of Valentinian and Valens.

[17] See the funeral oration in praise of Basil, Morell's Greg. Nazianzen, 1680, Tom. I. pp. 360, 363.

the turgid oration,[18] and are fain to relinquish the attempt to rescue a good and accomplished man from the suffocating embrace of his eulogist. Well might a warning be taken by the Church, even now, against the danger of indulging the spirit of exaggeration and of fond adulatory regard to the illustrious dead. It was this very spirit, as much as any other influence we can name, which effected the ruin and hastened the corruption of early Christianity. Hence, directly, sprang some of the very worst errors which, in a matured state, strengthened the despotism of Rome, and made its services idolatrous, and its practices abominable.

A reasonable distaste of the inflation which offends the eye so often on the pages of the early Christian writers (as well as motives of indolence or levity) has almost cut us off from correspondence with the worthies of the ancient Church; so that men whose vigour of mind, whose copious eloquence, and whose universal learning, should attract us to the perusal of their

[18] The twentieth oration, above referred to, ἐπιτάφιος, in which Gregory exhausts the powers of language in the service of his deceased friend and spiritual father; upon whom indeed, while living, he had lavished the hyperbolas of praise; as in the sixth, seventh, and nineteenth orations, and in various places of his Epistles. Could the simplicity of the Gospel, and the honour of Christ comport with that style of adulation which, in the age of Gregory, was accredited and common in the Church? The epistle, the nineteenth, in which he excuses himself from the charge of neglecting his friend, would astound the modern reader. No wonder that those should have fallen into an idolatry of the saints in heaven, who had already gone so far in worshipping one another.

works, are little more thought of than the demi-gods of the Grecian mythology. Yet undoubtedly by this oblivion we not only forfeit the advantage of justly estimating *things that are*, by comparison with things that have been; but fail of that special and highly important benefit which an exact knowledge of history conveys, namely —a timely caution against the first inroads of insidious errors and spurious sentiments.

It may be too much to affirm that Basil, eminent as were his qualities, or indeed that any single mind could have turned the tide which, at the opening of the fourth century, was in full course, bearing the Christian world—eastern and western, fast toward that swamp of superstition wherein all its virtues were soon after lost. Yet it is certain that although he might not have had power to divert the course of things, his influence was great and extensive in accelerating the unhappy movement. As well in the Latin as the Greek Church, and during many successive centuries, the writings of Basil formed the text book of monkery, and gave sanction to its follies.[19] His friend and

[19] The praises of Basil and of his institutions are on the lips of most of the contemporary and succeeding church writers, as well Latins as Greeks; and most of the oriental monkish establishments were founded upon the model of which he was the author. Isidore, (Lib. I. Epist. 61,) reproaches one who, while he professed high regard to the words of our DIVINELY INSPIRED FATHER—Basil, practically set his authority at naught. Equivalent expressions are employed by other writers. By a strange catachresis the monastic rule was called

biographer assures us, and his own writings attest the fact, that, not like many who so long as their private interests go well, trouble themselves not at all on account of the evils that may prevail abroad, Basil anxiously occupied himself with whatever concerned the welfare of the Christian community throughout the world:[20] and seeing the Church "split into ten thousand sects, and distracted with errors,"[21] laboured, as well by his writings as by personal interposition, to remedy the existing evils. Nor were his labours without fruit. The specific heresies with which he contended were held in check by his eloquence, and by the weight of his personal character.—False dogmas he discerned, and refuted; but alas, the false temper of the

generally by the writers of that age (as by Isidore in the epistle here referred to) *καινὴν φιλοσοφίας*, and the institution itself the true and divine philosophy. See a fond and frequent use of this phrase in the epistles of Gregory Nazianzen.

[20] . . . *ἀλλ' ὑψοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν διάρας, καὶ κύκλῳ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα περιαγαγὼν, πᾶσαν εἴσω ποιεῖται τὴν οἰκουμένην, ὅσην ὁ σωτήριος λόγος ἐπέδραμεν.* Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. His assertion is borne out by several passages in Basil's own writings, from which it appears that the state of the Church universal was the subject of his frequent (and not very happy) meditations: for instance, in his treatise on the Holy Spirit, c. 30, where, with admirable force of language and vigour of conception, he makes a comparison between the distracted state of the Church, and a sea-fight during a storm: or again in that remarkable epistle to the bishops of the West, in which he entreats them to send delegates to the eastern church, who might raise it from the dust. The same catholic and patriarchal solicitude appears in his epistles to Athanasius, and in those of similar import, to the bishops of Gaul and Italy. Basil's monasticism did not at all seclude him from public interests.

[21] . . . *εἰς τε μυρίας δόξας καὶ πλάνας διεσπασμένον.*

times—the universal wrong tendency of men's notions of religion and piety, this he did not discern; on the contrary, while fighting with errors in the detail, himself immensely promoted the grand error which had already poisoned the Church, and which, after a century or two, laid her prostrate as a corrupting carcase. So it is that what is special we can see: what is general escapes our notice.—A hundred times, while following Basil through his track of cogent argument and splendid illustration, one stops to ask, Why did not so comprehensive and penetrating an intelligence question itself, and question the Christian body, concerning the soundness of its first principles of practical piety? Why not inquire whether a system of conduct manifestly at variance with the course of nature, and with the constitutions of the social economy, was indeed enjoined by Scripture, or could, in its issue, be safe and advantageous? Not a surmise of this sort, so far as we can find, ever disturbed the meditations of the Cappadocian primate.—No;—but those only may fairly blame and wonder who themselves are habituated to entertain and indulge severe inquiries concerning the opinions and usages they most zealously affect.

Far from seeming fanatical or malignant, the monastic system, as it stands on the shining pages of Basil, bears quite a seductive form. His descriptions of his own seclusion among

the mountains of Pontus, and of the pleasures of abstracted meditation and holy exercise, can hardly be read without kindling an enthusiasm of the same order.[22] In his ascetic rules too

[22] It was customary with the monks of a later age to select for the site of their establishments the most horrid and pestilential swamps, and this professedly with the intention of mortifying the senses, and of rendering life as undesirable and as brief too as possible. Not so Basil: fully alive to the beauties of nature, he exults in his enjoyment of them. The following description, though perhaps too long for a note, tempts us to turn aside a moment from our path. Addressing the friend of his youth, Basil says—In Pontus God hath shewn me a spot precisely suited to my turn of mind and habits.—In truth it is the very scene which heretofore, while idly musing I had been wont to picture to myself. It is a lofty mountain, enveloped in dense forests: on its northern front it is watered by gelid streams that sparkle to the eye as they descend. At the foot of the hill a grassy plain spreads itself out, and luxuriates in the moisture that distils perpetually from the heights. Around the level space the woods, presenting trees of every species, take an easy sweep, so as to form a natural rampart. Calypso's Isle, so much praised by Homer, one might contemn in comparison with this spot: in fact itself might almost be called an island, since it is completely encircled and shut in—on two sides, by deep and precipitous ravines; on another, by the fall of a never-failing torrent, not easily forded, and which like a wall excludes intruders. In the rear the jagged and uneven heights, with a semicircular turn, rise from the skirts of the plain, and deny access, except through a single pass, of which we are masters. My habitation occupies the ridge of a towering height, whence the landscape, with the many bends of the river, spreads itself fairly to the view, and presents, altogether, a prospect not inferior, as I think, in gay attractions, to that which is offered by the course of the river Strymon, as seen from Amphipolis. That stream indeed moves so sluggishly in its bed, as hardly to deserve the name of river; but this, on the contrary (the most rapid I have ever seen) rushes on to a neighbouring rock, whence thrown off, it tumbles into a deep vortex in a manner that excites the admiration of every beholder. From the reservoir thus formed we are abundantly supplied with water; nor only so, for it nourishes in its stormy bosom a multitude of fishes. What might I not say of the balmy exhalations that arise from this verdant region, or of the breezes that attend the flow of the river? or some

there is very much of admirable and elevated sentiment, and of scriptural discretion; as well as a thorough orthodoxy. More easy is it to yield the heart and judgment to the persuasive influence of the writer, than to stand aloof, and call in question his principles.

Nor perhaps, apart from the aid of that comment which the after history of the Church has made upon those principles, would it have been easy to demonstrate their pernicious tendency: and yet there is little or nothing among the enormities of the ascetic life which might not be justified on the grounds assumed by Basil: — as for example, That the domestic constitution of man is abstractedly imperfect, and irreconcilable with high attainments in piety.[23]—That Religion—or at least that the

perhaps would rather speak of the endless variety of flowers that adorn the ground, or of the innumerable singing birds that make our woods their home. For my own part, my mind is too deeply engaged to give much attention to these lesser matters. To our commendation of this seclusion we are moreover able to add the praise of an unbounded fruitfulness in all kinds of produce, favoured as it is by its position and soil. To me its principal charm (and a greater cannot be) is this—that it yields me the fruits of tranquillity. For not only is the region far remote from the tumult of cities, but it is actually unfrequented by travellers of any sort, a few huntsmen excepted, who make their way hither in search of the game which abounds in it. This indeed is another of its advantages; for though we lack the ferocious bear and the wolf that afflict your country, we have deer and goats, sylvan flocks, and hares, and other animals of the sort. . . .

Who would not turn monk if he might lead the angelic life in a paradise such as that of Basil?

[23] Throughout the ascetic writings of Basil every thing commendable or desirable in the spiritual economy is assumed to attach

only admirable order of religion, consists—not in the worthy and fruitful exercise of virtuous principles amid the occasions and trials of common life; but in cutting off all opportunities of exercise, and in retreating from every trial of constancy:—That, in a word, piety is a something which in every sense is foreign to the present state, and can flourish only in proportion as its laws and constitutions are contemned and discarded.

The first practical measure necessary for giving effect to maxims such as these, was of course that of breaking up the conjugal economy, and of gathering men and women (destined by God for each other as sharers in the joys of life, and helpers in its labours and sorrows) into horrid fraternities and comfortless

exclusively to that mode of life which could be followed only in the monastery; nor does he think it practicable to maintain faith and virtue in the open world, or while encompassed with the cares and duties τοῦ κοινοῦ βίου. Not so Paul and Peter. In a letter to his friend Gregory Nazianzen, after describing the distractions of ordinary life, and the cares of matrimony, he says—From all which there is only one way of escape—namely, an entire separation from this world:—not indeed a being absent from it corporeally; but a rending of the soul from every bodily affection;—to be no citizen—to have no home—no property—no friends—to be destitute, and in absolute want—to have no concerns or occupation—to be cut off from commerce with the world—to be ignorant of human learning;—and so to prepare the heart for the due reception of the divine instructions. Such were the principles which this good man diffused throughout the Christian world:—himself did by no means carry them out fully into practice—this part was left for his admirers. So it is that great minds indulge in exaggerations which small minds interpret literally to their cost. It would be useless to quote fifty passages of like import—a hundred might be found.

sisterhoods of virginity.[24] This violence once done to nature—and then every lesser enormity was only a proper consequence and a consistent part of the monstrous invention. All fanaticism—all cruelties, all impurities were in embryo within this egg.[25] Strange does it seem—or strange to us of this age; that the authors and promoters of the unnatural usage, while reading the evangelic records, did not see that the virtue of our Lord and of his Apostles, if we are not to think it quite inferior to that of which the monks made their boast, was altogether unlike it, and must have been founded on different maxims. Of our Lord it is said that he was continually accompanied in his journeys by women who "ministered unto him." But the doctors of monkery assure us that the society of woman is altogether pernicious, and wholly incompatible with advancement in the Christian life;—yes, that the mere touch of a female hand is mortal to sanctity![26] The sanctity of

[24] The author of the Lives of the Saints would fain rid the reputation of St. Basil of the ambiguous honour of having written the tract on Virginity. If there be a doubt on this point, we will assuredly give the Archbishop and the *Monk* of Cæsarea the benefit of it. Whether it be his or not, the doctrine it maintains is in substance, though not in so unpleasing a form, found in his unquestioned writings. The passages that might the most aptly be quoted in this instance, are best left in their concealment of Greek.

The subject of celibacy, and its influence on the character, must again, and more copiously be treated. See next section.

[26] We turn for a moment from Basil, who nevertheless is strong on this point. "So far as possible," says Isidore, "all converse with women is to be shunned:—or if this cannot altogether be

the monk then, and the purity of the Son of God had not, it is manifest, any kindred elements.—Of the Apostles and first disciples it is said that they consorted together "with the women," and throughout the history of the Acts nothing appears to have attached to the manners of Christians that was at variance with the genuine simplicity and innocence which is the characteristic of a virtuous intercourse of the sexes. The "angelic life," described and lauded by every Father, from Tertullian, to the Abbot of Clairvaux, is not any where to be traced in the authentic story of the first and purest years of the Christian Institution. Why was not a fact so conspicuous perceived by Chrysostom, by Gregory, by Basil? Alas! such is the original limitation, or such the superinduced infatuation of the human mind, that, when once it takes a wrong path, not the most eminent powers of reason, nor the most extensive

avoided, they should be spoken with only, the eye fixed on the earth. . . . . In the case of almost all who have fallen by their means *death hath entered in by the windows!*" Lib. I. Epis. 67. Cassian, and still more, his commentators, might be quoted at large on matters of this sort. Gregory the Great says — Qui corpus suum continentiæ dedicant, habitare cum feminis non presumant; and he tells a long story to enforce his advice. Dialog. Lib. III. c. 7. Sulpitius Severus thinks it necessary to excuse his hero, St. Martin, in an instance (referred to in Nat. Hist. of Enthus. Sect. IX.) in which he had suffered the touch of a woman: and in the same spirit, an unknown monkish writer—

Causa gravis scelerum cessabit amor mulierum,
Colloquium quarum nil est nisi virus amarum
Præbens, sub mellis dulcedine, pocula fellis.

Carmen Parœneticum.

accomplishments avail to give it a suspicion of its error!

All that could be done by a vigorous and comprehensive mind, well furnished with Scriptural principles, to render the monastic institute as good as its nature admitted, was actually effected by Basil;[27] and his ascetic writings—his Rules, the longer and the shorter, and his monastic constitutions, if they could, in translation, be purged of their characteristic asceticism, would form an excellent and edifying body of instructions in the practice of piety.—But our time and labour might be better spent. Happily the principles and maxims of religion we can draw from purer sources; and while it is unquestionably incumbent upon the few who aspire to exercise a correct and comprehensive judgment concerning the various phases of Christianity, to make themselves familiarly conversant with the voluminous remains of ecclesiastical literature, it is certain that the private Christian, with the Bible and with modern expositions in his hand, need not

[27] Evidence might without difficulty be adduced to prove that the monastic institution, such as it had become in the times of Basil, was rather corrected and purified, than rendered still more extravagant by the influence of his writings. In *his own age* therefore (if the fact be as we presume) he was a Reformer. His influence, on the contrary, as extended through succeeding ages, has been to hold in credit a system which, but for the support of men like himself, must soon have fallen under the general reprobation and contempt of mankind. Remove from this institution what Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and Bernard did to sustain it, and not all the exploits of a thousand fanatics could have availed to keep it going.

sigh that those treasures are locked up from his use.

In its rancorous stage the fanaticism of austerity is not to be looked for in a writer so great and good as the Bishop of Cæsarea. For instances of this we must turn to some of his contemporaries of less note; and to those who afterwards followed in the same track. Nevertheless the germs of malignant religionism (such as in a preceding section we have briefly stated them to be) are not wanting even in Basil. It is evident, for example, that the very serious impressions he entertained of the Divine Justice, and its bearing upon man, were not balanced, as in the minds of the apostles, by a clear and auspicious understanding of the great article of justification by faith:—his faith therefore was comfortless, severe, and dim.[28] Again, the scriptural belief of the agency and malice of infernal spirits, had become, in that age, and before it,

[28] The disorders, the corruption, and the religious feuds of the age had evidently affected the mind of Basil in a manner not favourable to his dispositions. A genuine lover of solitude, he was a passionate admirer of Ideal Perfection, and turned with alarm and distaste, as well from the church as the world, in the actual state of both. Yet his was a mind of the *governing class*. From public interests he could not refrain;—not his paradise in the depth of the wilderness could hold him, when a sphere of power opened itself before him; but he ascended the archiepiscopal throne an anchoret in heart, more even than in discipline and garb;—might we say, an anchoret by imaginative taste. We regard his ascetic writings as the product of the original incongruities of his character: seated in the place of power, he aimed not so much to govern the church-secular and actual; and as a Latin would have done, as to create or to mould a celestial community that should yield itself fully to his plastic hand.

so turgid and extravagant that it filled a far larger space on the circle of vision than properly belongs to it. In truth, among the monks, the subject of infernal seduction quite occupied the mind, to the exclusion almost of happier objects of meditation.—The devil, whatever may be the title of the piece, is the real hero of the drama of monastic piety :—that piety therefore has all the proper characters of superstition.[29]

Furthermore, the broad distinction made between what was insolently termed "the common life," and the "angelic," or monastic, and upon which Basil so much insists, could not fail to generate, as in fact it did, a supercilious disdain of the mass, not of mankind at large merely, but of the Christian community, and with it, a preposterous conceit (ill concealed beneath the cant of humility) of peculiar privilege and celestial dignity, as the distinction of a few. Thus was it that all the stones of the foundation of the pandemonium of pride, impurity, and cruelty, were laid by the hands of men whom we must venerate and admire.

[29] At a very early time the belief of Christians, and especially of the monks, concerning infernal agency, had assumed a form from which nothing could follow but the follies and the horrors of superstition. A far extended and exact inquiry would be needed to place this subject in a just light. Though intimately connected with the rise and maturity of Fanaticism, it is too copious a theme to be entered upon in this volume.—It demands, however, to be fully considered if we would obtain a comprehensive and satisfactory understanding of the early corruption of Christianity.

The most benign in its elements, and yet perhaps the most destructive in its actual consequences of all the forms of fanaticism (under this general head) remains to be mentioned ;—we mean the custom of pilgrimage. What enterprise can seem more innocent than that of a journey to gratify the tranquil yearnings of pious affection toward a sacred spot ?—But what usage more fatal, if we look at its products through a course of ages ? Well may it be questioned whether the most ferocious of the ancient superstitions ever made such havoc of human life as have the tranquil pilgrimages of the eastern and western nations. Even the merciless military executions perpetrated by zealot kings upon their own subjects at the instigation of friar-confessors, have probably not caused more death and misery than pilgrimage has occasioned. The reader might startle perhaps to hear it affirmed that, looking only to modern times, the wars that have raged in different parts of Europe and Asia have not wasted the human species to a greater amount than the noiseless processions that, during the same era, have been streaming toward the centres of Brahminical, Mohammedan, and Romish superstition.

Travel by sea and land—the latter not less than the former, does indeed include a hundred chances of death unknown to the resident portion of mankind. But journeys prompted by

motives of religion seem to invite and concentrate every ill chance that can possibly belong to a passage from country to country. Among the many routes beaten by the foot of man, which catch the eye as we look broadly over the earth's surface, if there be one that stares out from the landscape—whitened with bones, we shall always find it terminate at some holy shrine. A spot made important by nothing but the dreams of superstition, has become, by the accumulated mortality of ages, the very Golgotha of a continent; and Death has fitly erected his proudest trophies on the paths that have led to the place of a sepulchre.

Besides other, and incidental reasons of the difference, it is enough to say that, while men are engaged in mercantile adventure simply, and are acting upon the common inducements of worldly interest, they naturally foresee dangers, and provide against them. But the train of pilgrimage, at first mustered by Folly, has renounced as an impiety the guidance of reason, and hurrying onward, every day with a more desperate haste than before, has at length poured itself as a torrent along the very valley of death.

It is hard to conjecture to what extent the mischief might have reached — especially in those ages when the frenzy was at its height, if it had not been checked by the saving admixture of grosser motives with the pure fanaticism

which was its prime impulse. How greatly are we often indebted (if pride would but own it) to those whispered suggestions of common prudence which we should indignantly spurn if they dared to utter themselves aloud! Yes, and in the wondrous complexity of human nature, provisions are made for the clogging or diverting of every power that tends to run up to a dangerous velocity. Religious delusion is in fact found to coalesce readily, on the one side with soft sensualities, and on the other—strange amalgam!—with mercenary calculations. Oftener than can be told has pious heroism slid down by a rapid descent into sordid hypocrisy, and the stalking devotee of yesterday has become to-day a sheer knave. Just so does a torrent tumble from crag to crag of the mountains, and sparkle in the sun as it storms along;—until, reaching a level and a slimy bed, it takes up the impurity it finds—gets sluggish as well as foul; and at length creeps silent through the oozy channels of a swamp.

The wan and wasted pilgrim—shall we call him devotee or pedlar?—who left his home warm with genuine fervours, unluckily for his reputation, discovered as he went, the secret of profitable adventure. Become dealer, either in articles of vulgar merchandize,* or, still better, in the inestimable wares of superstition—rags—bones—pebbles—splinters, he took his course,

* See Robertson's Disquisition on India, Sect. 3.

barely knowing at length of what sort his errand was; but actually reached his home a wealthy trader, who had gone forth a crazy mendicant. The important effect however of a transmutation of motives such as this, was to impart caution and forethought to the pilgrim enterprise; for it is a singular inconsistency of human nature that men will ordinarily take much more care of life *for the sake* of goods and property, than they will do of life by itself. If it had not been for these mitigations, pilgrimage, during certain eras, might almost have swallowed up the human race in the countries where chiefly the madness raged.[30]

A portion only of this system of religious vagrancy belongs to our immediate subject; for it is very far from being true that all pilgrims have been fanatics. Some, as we have said, should be reckoned mere traders, or hucksters under pretext of religion; just as valiant knights were often freebooters, under the same guise.

[30] It was not merely as venders of relics, or of the productions of the east, that the pilgrims found the means of refunding the expenses of their journey; for it appears to have been customary for them on their way home to perform sacred dramas in the streets and squares of the towns through which they passed. Ceux, says a French writer, qui revenoient de Jerusalem et de la Terre Sainte, &c. . . . . composoient des cantiques sur leurs voyages, y méloient le récit de la vie et de la mort du Fils de Dieu, ou du Jugement dernier, d'une manière grossière, mais que le chant et la simplicité de ces temps là sembloient rendre pathétique . . . . . Ces Pélerins qui alloient par troupes, et qui s'arrétoient dans les rues et dans les places publiques où ils chantoient, le Bourdon à la main, le chapeau et le mantelet chargez de coquilles et d'images peintes de diverses couleurs, faisoient une espèce de spectacle qui plut. . . . .

Some, we cannot doubt, have been instigated mainly by that taste for adventure and love of roving which, in certain bosoms, is an irresistible impulse. Some, moreover, and not a few, have been flogged on, through their weary way, by pure superstitious terror, or by the well-founded dread of the future retribution of their enormous crimes. And lastly, we must except those (perhaps not many) whose motive may have been only a mild poetic enthusiasm, wholly free from virulence or gloomy fear, and not very difficult to be conceived of if we are ourselves at all open to imaginative sentiments, and if we will surrender the fancy awhile to the seductive ideas that are called up by long meditation of a distant and hallowed region.[31]

There was a time—long gone by, when the streams of pilgrimage (if the anachronism of the phrase may be pardoned) flowed from all points around the Mediterranean toward the principal centres of philosophy, or of legislative science. First India, or Chaldea, then Egypt, then Greece, drew from all lands the votaries of wisdom. How marvellously must the love of pure wisdom have declined since those ages!—

[31] Quàm dulce est peregrinis post multam longi itineris fatigationem, post plurima terræ marisque pericula, ibi tandem quiescere, ubi et agnoscunt suum Dominum quievisse! Puto jam præ gaudio non sentiunt viæ laborem, nec gravamen reputant expensarum; sed tanquam laboris præmium, cursusve bravium (βραβεῖον) assecuti; juxta Scripturæ sententiam, gaudent vehementer cum invenerint sepulcrum. (St. Bernard. Exhort. ad Milites Templi, cap. 11.) a tract we shall have occasion again, and more fully to refer to. See Sect. VII.

or else wisdom has become the produce of all climates. More nearly analogous to the pilgrimages of later times, though still very unlike them, was that widely-extended practice which brought every year multitudes of the Greeks of all the settlements, even the most remote, and not a few of the still more distant barbarians, to the oracular temples of the mother country, or to those of Ionia and Æolia;—to Oropus, Aba, Dodona, Delphi. Yet although the errand in these cases was often a fruitless one, and the belief whence it arose superstitious, the motive (had but the premises been sound) was calm and rational, and not at all of the sort to kindle the imagination, or to disturb the passions. Instruction, advice, or what perhaps might be equally serviceable—a *final decision* on some perplexing occasion of public or private life, was needed, and sought for; and, whether for the better or the worse, actually obtained from the ministers of the mephitic cavern. Now it must be granted that an authoritative determination (even supposing there to be an equal chance of truth and error) might, in many an instance, well repay a journey of three hundred miles, or a voyage of five. The common business of life, and the affairs of state too, were often much advantaged among the Greeks by their appeals to what one might call a Court of Chancery, in which the god gave verdicts—

generally without delays—always without pleadings—and most often for moderate fees.

We have yet to search for the pattern or the origin of the practice of pilgrimage; but find resemblances rather than actual analogies. Such may be deemed, and it is not more than a resemblance, that usage of the Jewish people which brought the male population of the country three times in the year to the centre and only sanctioned place of public worship. An auspicious institution—well adapted to diffuse, and to keep in brisk circulation among a simple and agricultural people, the several elements of social and religious prosperity. Then it is evident that the shortness of the distances, the frequency of the visit, and the universality of the obligation, must have obviated the evils which attend the custom of pilgrimage. No danger, ordinarily, nor perilous adventure, and no extreme privations, could beset a journey of fifty—a hundred, or a hundred and fifty miles, through a homeland, densely peopled; nor could any but the calmest and happiest sort of excitement spring up on an occasion which, instead of being a single and solemn act of a man's life, was the habit of his life. But the main circumstance of difference is this, that the resort of the people to the tabernacle and temple, being a national duty, and a general or universal practice, it could never be made the ground of boasting or honour to individuals, nor could be thought of as a

meritorious enterprise, by the aspirants to religious reputation.

The mosaic institution seems to have *set* the habit of journeying in the Jewish character, and to have fixed it there so firmly and tranquilly, that in after ages, when the circumstances of a visit to the "Holy City" were altogether altered, and were such as might readily have kindled an active fanaticism, dangerous to the governments which allowed it, the ancient devout serenity held its place in the feelings and manners of the people of the dispersion.—Those who, during the Persian, Macedonian, and Roman eras (the early portion of it) came to appear before the Lord from the remotest settlements of Libya, or Scythia, or India, went "from strength to strength" with a feeling nearly the same as that of their happier ancestors, whose journey lay only through the olive vales of Palestine. It is not until we approach the dark hour of the catastrophe of the city that we meet with the indications of a different spirit. Then indeed a frenzy had seized the obdurate race, both at home and in the lands of its exile; and the resort of the scattered nation to the ill-fated Jerusalem, was like the rush of acrid humours to the heart and head of a delirious man. This season excepted, the Jewish pilgrimages to the holy city were not, as it appears, marked by fanatical turbulence.—The purpose of the worshippers was rational,

and their religious notions were, in the main, of a substantial and healthy sort;—they did not travel a thousand miles—to kiss a stone, or to purchase a relic; but to take part in the services of that Temple where alone, in all the world, the first principles of Theology were understood, and the true God adored. The journey, and its attendant sentiments, were such as befitted its object.

It is a preposterous creed that makes pilgrimage fatal. In this case Delusion leads the way; Crime attends the route; and Despair and Frenzy at the last come up to urge the infatuated troop toward the horrid spot where Misery and Death are to be glutted with victims. Such, in brief, and with circumstantial differences only, have been the pilgrimages that have beaten the roads of India, of Arabia, and of Palestine. To the latter, we should remember, is due the blood-stained glory of giving birth to the Crusades; for if there had been no resort of the pious to the desolated sepulchre, there would probably have been no heroes of the cross:—if no Peter the Hermit, no Tancred, no Godfrey, no Baldwin, or Richard!

Should we not, in this place, note the fact that, while superstition, as if with a power of fascination, has always been drawing men from extensive surfaces toward some one vortex of delusion, true Religion, on the contrary, has shewn itself to possess an expansive force, which

has rendered it a point of radiation, or an emanative centre, whence light and blessings have flowed to the remotest circumference. Is a criterion wanted which, by exterior facts only, might discriminate between a false and a true belief? little hazard would be run in assuming such a one as this—That the former will be seen to be gathering up, and accumulating, and devouring;—while the other spreads itself abroad, and scatters, and diffuses, as widely as it may, whatever benefits it has to confer.—Christianity is not the religion of a shrine, of a sepulchre, of a chair, or of a den; but of all the broad ways of the world, and of every place where man is found.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

In treating of the Fanaticism of the Scourge, a passing notice, at least, of the miserable Flagellants of the 13th and 14th centuries, may be looked for. The pitiable frenzy, though of fatal consequence for a time, and horribly suppressed, does not seem to merit much attention either as a matter of history or of philosophy. What has been handed down concerning these dolorous vagrants is familiar to most readers. Froissart's account (Vol. ii. p. 263.) relates to the last eruption of the Flagellants. "This year of our Lord 1349, there came from Germany persons who performed public penitencies by whipping themselves with scourges having iron hooks, so that their backs and shoulders were torn: they chaunted also, in a piteous manner, canticles of the nativity and sufferings of our Saviour; and could not by their rules, remain in any town more than one night: they travelled in companies of more or less in number (it is elsewhere affirmed that they amounted sometimes to ten thousand, and included

persons of the highest rank) and thus journeyed through the country, performing their penitence for thirty-three days, being the number of years Jesus Christ remained on earth; and then returned to their own homes. These penitencies were thus performed to entreat the Lord to restrain his anger, and withhold his vengeance; for at this period an epidemic malady ravaged the earth, and destroyed a third part of its inhabitants." This fanaticism was of too turbulent a kind to be suffered by the Church, which, after severely denouncing it, and in vain, at length let loose upon it the armed ministers of her power. Eight thousand persons were massacred in a day by the Teutonic knights at the command of Pope Clement VI. There is reason to believe that some articles of the dominant superstition had been called in question by these penitents.

SECTION VI.

FANATICISM OF THE BRAND.

GALERIUS, Alva, Bonner, cross our path in every street of a populous city; and moreover the agents and ministers of such formidable personages might be found in every crowd. The chief and his company, fit for the labours of religious cruelty, we must not think have passed away with ages long gone by; but rather believe that they are about us now, and wait only the leave or bidding of circumstances to re-act their parts. Or, to confess in a word the whole humiliating truth, it is Human Nature, such, alas, as it is harboured in each of our bosoms, that offers itself with more or less readiness to the excitement of malign and even murderous passions!

At once therefore justice toward the signalized authors of persecution, whom we are apt to regard as beings of infernal origin, and a due caution, having respect to the possible events of some day which may yet come in the world's

history, demand that, instead of taking a distant glance at the gloomy tragedies of remote times, we should look into the heart in search of those deep sunken motives whence the worst atrocities might take their spring. The man is indeed to be envied whose spirit contains no such elements as might enable him to institute an analysis of this sort. Few will make the profession; and perhaps among those who would, there may be one or more that, if actually drawn into the eddy of turbulent passions, would be found foremost in deeds of violence; for it is certain that the prime impulses of a sanguinary fanaticism act and re-act one upon another until an emotion is generated which quite bears down the gentler feelings of our nature.

The offence given to self-love, and the wound inflicted upon pride by resistance in matters of opinion, is deep in proportion, not simply to the *importance* of the question debated, but to its *obscurity* also; for in this case a secret dread of being at length overthrown and humbled, adds asperity to arrogance. It is obvious then that no subject can equal religion in furnishing occasion to these keen resentments. The vastness and unlimited range of the matters it is concerned with—the infinite importance of its capital truths, and the readiness with which the weight of what is substantial may be made over to what is not so—even to the most trivial of its adjuncts, fit it well to impart the utmost

vehemence to whatever feelings attend the contests of mind with mind. All this hardly needs to be affirmed; nor can we wonder to see the bitterness of ordinary strife assuming when religion is the subject of controversy, a solemn virulence, such as makes secular contentions seem vapid and trivial. Common hatred now rises to an immortal abhorrence; wrath swells to execration, and every ill wish breaks out in anathemas.

That feelings so strong should vent themselves in vindictive acts, when opportunity serves, is only natural; and we might, without advancing further, account in *this* manner solely for the cruelties in which religious discords have so often terminated. But there seems to be something yet deeper in the tendency to employ torments and death as means of persuasion. It should be expected that a course of action so preposterous as that of destroying men in professed love to their souls,[1] will be found to take its rise from a sheer absurdity: — such, for example, as that of putting an antagonist into the position with which we associate the idea of atrocious crimes *in order to confirm ourselves*

[1] There is no cruelty comparable to that which wraps itself in a villanous hypocrisy. The Romish Church (nor that alone) has always professed the tenderest regard to the spiritual welfare of those whom she was about to let drop into her fires. And thus the Holy Office, in the instructions which guide its agents, provides that— "If a prisoner falls sick, the inquisitors must carefully provide him with every assistance, and more particularly attend to all that relates to HIS SOUL." See Llorente.

in the belief that he is indeed an atrocious criminal. This we grant is, reasoning in a circle; but it is a logic not strange to the human mind. A secret influence not to be resisted, impels us to do homage to the primary elements of virtue, even when most we are violating its particular precepts. This homage, although tacit, and rendered unconsciously, is not the less real in its effects. We can in no case hate and curse our fellow-men until after we have wrought ourselves up to the persuasion that they are condign objects of such treatment. But in the instance of religious animosities such a persuasion is not ordinarily to be attained, except in a circuitous track. Even the slenderest pretext for charging upon our opponent moral delinquencies is often wanting: on the contrary, perhaps a life and temper absolutely blameless put to shame every attempted calumny. Woe to our victim if this be the case, for then the cruel work of vilifying him must be so much the more elaborate! To establish to our own satisfaction the guilt of our enemy by the method of argument—by fair inference and evidence, is a process too slow to keep pace with the velocity of the vindictive passions. What then remains but by the forms of law—if law be at our bidding, and by the sword of justice—if justice be our obsequious servant, to consign the hated impugner of our will to the class of malefactors?—When once we have looked upon

him covered with ignominy—and if we can but see him pale with the paleness which a dungeon sheds on the face—and if we do but catch the clanking of a chain about his neck which a Barabbas yesterday wore; yes, and if we hear him groaning under torments that are the necessary schooling of obdurate wickedness—then we can fill up with ease what before was wanting to tranquillize a just revenge. The circle of our ideas is complete, our moral instincts come round to their close; we breathe again, and by inflicting those heavy injuries which are *presumptive evidence of demerit,* we prove to ourselves, as well as to the world, that the object of our hatred was indeed worthy of detestation!

A mode of reasoning analogous to this (if reasoning it should be called) is not of rare occurrence.—"The man must be odious, or should I thus maltreat him?" and then greater outrages must be committed, if it be only to justify the first assault. The bystanders in a common quarrel may often follow angry spirits around a circle of this sort.—Perhaps in the first burst of resentment a much more grievous imputation of bad motives was advanced than the facts of the case would at all sustain; or indeed than the accuser had himself seriously intended. But his position is now taken, and hatred can make no backward step. At once to bring over to his side the sentiments of others, and to fill out his own vindictive emotions, he goes on to

deal with his antagonist *as if* the exaggerated indictment were fully established. Then, from the overt act of vengeance an inference is brought back upon the demerit of its object.

Religious rancour once generated, whether in the manner we have described, or in some other which we have failed to penetrate, gets aggravation from incidental causes, some of which demand to be mentioned. Such as arise from specific opinions we shall presently have occasion to speak of. To look then to external causes, one of the most ordinary and obvious is the mixed feeling of jealousy and interested pride that floats about the purlieus of every despotism, and especially of every religious despotism. It is trite to say that cruelty is produced or exasperated by the consciousness of impotence; and as the foundations of spiritual tyranny are less ostensible, and more precarious than those of secular government, its alarms will be more vivid, its jealousies more envenomed, and its modes of procedure more rigorous and intemperate. The natural temper of men being supposed the same, it can hardly happen otherwise than that the rod or staff of ghostly supremacy should be a more terrible engine than the sceptre and the sword of temporal power. Must we not admit too, and may we not admit without offence, that, if once he gives way to the taste for cruelty, the man of

the cowl and cloister will prove himself a more inexorable and a more ingenious tormentor, than the man of the field and cuirass ?[2]

In its very worst condition, and during those ages when every thing human was broken up or corrupt, the sacerdotal order, looked at in the whole of its influence, must be allowed to have been a benefit to the nations: and how incalculable a benefit has it proved in happier eras! Yes, and who shall imagine the happy fruits of the same institution when it shall come to take effect upon the social system with the unembarrassed power of its proper motives? What now we have to speak of is the special sacerdotal temper, such as we find it when all those motives were forgotten, or were spurned.

The moral sentiments are almost always, or in some degree, put in danger by the possession

[2] One of the earliest and most zealous advocates of the practice of burning heretics is said to have been the Abbot Theophanes, who himself suffered extreme severities under the Iconoclast, Leo V. Pain (for beside his voluntary penances he was subject to the stone) was the unhappy man's element; and he doled it out to others with a freedom corresponding with the alacrity with which he bore it himself. This connexion between the infliction and the endurance of torments has been a very frequent one;—frequent enough to bring under just reprobation every specious form of asceticism. The Abbot Theophanes, we are told, commenced his course of abnegation by an act well fitting the part he afterwards acted as author or promoter of ecclesiastical cruelties. "Being arrived at man's estate, he was compelled by his friends to take a wife; but on the day of his marriage he spoke in so moving a manner to his consort on the shortness and uncertainty of this life, that they made a mutual vow of perpetual chastity. She afterwards became a nun; and he for his part built two monasteries in Mysia."—*Lives of the Saints*, March 13.

of privilege; still more so if the beneficial distinction be of an undefined and intangible sort. This danger is much enhanced if serious privations, or disabilities, are the price paid for indistinct honours; because in that case a perpetual petulance, or dull revenge, works itself into the character, and adds the bitterness of concealed envy to the arrogance of rank; so that the malign sentiments of the pauper and of the oligarch are concentred in the same bosom. If moral disadvantage can yet be aggravated, it is so when the being who already is too much alienated from his species by the destitution of real sympathies, and by participation in a ghostly nobility, is, in his mode of life, actually secluded from the open world, and breathes the poison of a cell.

Nevertheless the pernicious consequence of circumstances so unfavourable will be found open to many more exceptions than theory may lead us to expect; for it might naturally be thought that not one human heart in a thousand would fail to become depraved from long exposure to influences so bad: whereas in fact it is not perhaps more than a third of every thousand that undergoes to the full the perversion of its genuine sentiments; while another third appears scarcely at all impaired by a process that might seem of efficacy enough to break down the virtue of a seraph.

Yet our anticipations will not fail us in

relation to the third or the fourth of any body of men so cruelly placed in the very focus of spiritual ruin. Some such proportion will always exhibit in temper (and in conduct if opportunity permits) what a vicious system may do in rendering men—men like ourselves, abhorrent, malign, or foul. Especially shall we find in such a body frequent instances of a peculiar species of ferocity, like to nothing else in the circle of human sentiments;[3]—a rancour from which has been discharged all that is vigorous and generous in manly resentments, and all that is relenting in those of woman;—a rancour which, although some few single examples of it had before been shewn to the world in the course of twenty centuries, had never attached to a body as its characteristic until the sacerdotal institution, under the fostering care of the Romish Church, reached its maturity.

What modern heart would not leap with fear if it were permitted to us for an hour to step back from the nineteenth century to the age of Vespasian, and to push our way into the theatre of imperial and popular diversions, just when the gladiator was about to die for the sport

[3] In that particular species of ingenuity which exercises itself in the invention of torments, the sacerdotal artists have certainly outstripped all competitors. Happy is the reader if he be still ignorant—and continue so, of the *mechanical secrets* of ecclesiastical prison-houses. Descriptions of this sort injure the mind; they rack the imagination, and engender emotions of resentment and disgust which do not well comport with Christian feelings.

of a philosophic prince, and of sumptuous citizens; or when hungry beasts were to be glutted with the warm flesh of the nobility of a conquered kingdom! And yet the ancient Roman theatre, with its mere sprinkling of blood, and its momentary pangs and shrieks, quite fades if brought into comparison with that Colisæum of Papal cruelty, in which not a hundred or two of victims, but myriads of people—yes, nations entire—have been gorged! If we must shrink back, as assuredly we should, from the one spectacle, we shudder even to think of the other. Though it were possible to summon courage enough to gaze upon the mortal, yet equal, conflict of man with man in the theatre, how shall we contemplate torments and burnings inflicted by the strong upon the weak; or if we might endure to see the lion and the panther spring upon their prey, could we force ourselves to the far more horrid sight, when the priest and the friar, athirst, were to rush upon men, women, and babes!

Agitating emotions, whether of indignation or of terror, are however to be restrained, and in calmer mood—a mood compatible with the exercise of reason, and which may allow us even to intermingle, where it can be done, excuses and pity for the perpetrators of crime (often far more unhappy than the sufferers) we should survey that strange scene of woe whereon the Romish priesthood, age after age, has figured.

But is it equitable, some may ask, to single out the Papal Hierarchy as the prime or incomparable example of religious ferocity? Were not the ancient idolatries — Druidical, Syrian, Scythian, and Indian, cruel and sanguinary; and have not the more modern superstitions of Mexico and Hindoostan been deeply stained with blood? This is true; but a broad distinction presents itself, which places the Papal immolations and tortures on a ground where there is nothing to compare with them. It might be enough to say that an annual or triennial sacrifice of a few victims, or the gorging of captives reserved for that very purpose from the slaughter of the field, have in no country amounted to a tenth of the numbers that, in equal portions of time, have fallen around the altar of the Romish Church. But leaving this point, there is a clear difference, much in favour of the pagan rites, between the shedding the blood of a *victim* (using the term in its restricted and proper sense) at the impulse of a sincere superstitious dread; and those executions and exterminations that have sprung, not from horrors of conscience, not from error of belief; but from a sheer rancour. Superstition does indeed *tend* to blood, and often is guilty of it; but Fanaticism — fanaticism such as that of the Romish Hierarchy, breathes revenge, and murder beats from its heart.

Historic justice demands however that another comparison should be made, and it is one which seems to relieve a little the horrors of the papal tyranny:—we speak of course of the severities under which the Christians of the first three centuries suffered, from the pagan predecessors of the Popes, on the seven hills. —Might we not believe that the demon of blood, though dislodged for a season when the house of Cæsar fell in ruins, had lurked a century or two in the mists of the Tiber, or had slept in the swamps of Campania, until scenting its new occasion, and springing up refreshed, it entered with greetings the halls of the Vatican. It may be difficult or impossible, imperfect as is our information, equitably to decide between imperial and papal Rome, on the question of ferocity. Yet some points of difference present themselves very clearly;—as 1st. — The imperial persecutions of the Church are, in most instances, to be attributed to the personal temper or the fears or jealousies of the emperors, as individuals.[4] Whereas

[4] The first persecution (to follow the vulgar computation) was the act of Nero—Religionum usquequaque contemtor; the second of Domitian—non solum magnæ, sed et callidæ inopinatæque sævitiæ: what shall we say of the emperors to whose jealousies or philosophic pride are attributed the third and fourth? The fifth took place under Severus—natura sævus—vere Pertinax, vere Severus. The sixth under Maximin—a genuine savage, as jealous as fierce:—the seventh, horrible as it was, should be attributed to the political fears and energetic resolves of Decius:—the eighth persecution perhaps had its origin in the envy of an obscure individual. The austerity and vigour of Aurelian, qui esset, says Lactantius, natura vesanus et

the papal cruelties sprung from the system, and never failed to be displayed, whatever might be the character of the Pontiff, as often as the specific provocation arose.[5] 2dly. More than one or two of the ten persecutions (to follow the common computation) appear to have been, on the part of the imperial government, a desperate endeavour, prompted by serious alarms, for ridding the state of a formidable intestine foe. A reluctant use, as it seems, was made of means so severe, but which were deemed indispensable to the preservation of the vast and shaken edifice of the empire.[6]

præceps, if not diverted, would probably have given to the ninth more than a name. The tenth and the heaviest was the fruit partly of the personal dispositions, but more of the political fears of its two imperial authors.

[5] The personal character of the Pontiff has no doubt often made itself felt in the measures pursued by the Church. But in quite as many instances the handling of the keys has seemed to effect a total metamorphosis of dispositions:—the *cardinal* was one being—the *pope* another; and the college has had reason almost to doubt the identity of the person whom they had lifted to the summit of power. Thus the very man who had been singled out as more likely than any other to respect his oath, and to achieve desired reformations; has been the one most audaciously to brave the amazement of his comrades, and to defy the clamours of christendom. The average date of each pontificate, taking the entire series to the present time, has been little more than seven years — and those, generally, the last years of decrepit age. But a system of government which, from century to century consigns the reins of power to trembling hands, must of course derive its temper and character much more from the body than from the head. The average reigns of the Roman Emperors was about ten years;—and those, for the most part, the mid years of life;—few of the series reached the extreme verge of mortal existence.

[6] Putting out of view the violent dispositions of Galerius, there is abundant reason to believe that the fatal decision which burst like a

Now if it be alleged that the papal persecutions had often similar motives, and might therefore admit of a parallel excuse, we must rest the difference on the ground, that the maintenance of a civil polity (if the means be lawful) is a duty and a virtue in public men; while we can regard the supporters of a ghostly domination in no other light than as hateful usurpers:—never can it be a virtue to uphold that which, in its essence, and under any condition, is wicked. Then 3dly. The pagan persecutions were (for the most part) enacted and executed by men schooled in the field of war — and of war, often, against barbarous hordes. They were men indurated too, from youth by the spectacles of the theatre — that is to say, taught ferocity as much by their pastimes and festivities, as by their campaigns. From the hands of beings so trained what could be looked for?[7] But it is quite otherwise with the popish cruelties; for these, in every age,

thunder over the Roman world from the palace of Nicomedia was the result, in the main, of purely political calculations. Nothing beyond such calculations appears (two hundred years before) to have influenced the conduct of Trajan, such as himself holds it up to view in his letter of instructions to Pliny.

[7] The Roman soldier had become a far more ferocious being in the age of the emperors than he was in that of the consuls. In the early era he was a member of a limited community, and had his home—his virtues—his personal sentiments; in the latter period he was ordinarily nothing better than an enlisted barbarian—how unlike to the warrior-citizen of whom, subaltern as well as chief, it might be said, in the words of Florus, . . . expeditione finita, rediit ad boves rursus triumphalis agricola.

have been devised and executed by men of the cloister; men emasculate in habit, and whose nerves should have had the sensibility which sloth, study, and indulgence engender. An atrocity perpetrated by the hand of a delicate woman is always deemed to indicate a more malignant soul than if it be the act of a bandit or a pirate. By the same rule, should not the priest be somewhat more humane than the soldier? Yet in fact the principals and the agents in the destruction of heretics were men who had personally learned none of the bad lessons of war, and had witnessed no scenes of torment or blood-shed but those in which themselves were the actors. Should it be forgotten, while this comparison is pursued, that the emperor and the senate, the proconsul and the centurion, knew nothing more than the darkness of paganism could teach them; but popes and cardinals, legates, priests and monks, held the Gospel of peace in their hand![8]

The bas-reliefs and bronzes of the age of Roman greatness have brought down for our

[8] It is customary to speak of the middle ages as being destitute as well of scriptural as of profane learning; and this may be true of the mass of the people; but certainly not of the principal actors in Church affairs. By the ecclesiastical writers of those times Scripture is quoted as largely and familiarly as it is in modern religious books. St. Bernard (of whom we shall have occasion presently to speak more at large) in the tracts and letters by which he instigated the second crusade, scarcely moves through a paragraph without a text.—Every thing is thought of—but the morality of the enterprise!

inspection the form and visage of the Roman soldier, such as he was under Nerva, Trajan, Aurelius, Domitian. The contracted brow declares that storms of battle have beat upon it often: the glare of that overshadowed eye throws contempt upon death: the inflated nostril breathes a steady rage: the fixed lips deny mercy: the rigid arm and the knit joints, have forced a path to victory, through bristled ramparts and triple lines of shields and swords. And withal there is a hardness of texture that seems the outward expression of an iron strength and rigour of soul—a power, as well of enduring, as of inflicting pain; and the one with almost as much indifference as the other. Shall we conceive of encountering, on the open field, a being so firmly fierce, and so long accustomed to crush and trample upon man? But who shall imagine himself to have been delivered into the hands of the Roman soldier armed, not as a warrior but as executioner? This indeed is terror. Alas then, let us commiserate the fate of our brethren and sisters in Christ—the early martyrs!—What had they to look for when the centurion's band, such as we see it now encircling the column of Trajan, was let loose upon a flock of trembling victims, with license and command to torture and to kill![9]

[9] The cruelties endured by the Christians were often inflicted to appease the ferocity of the rabble. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸν Ἄτταλον τῷ

Yet we have not reached the extreme point of horror:—there remains a picture which still more chills the blood. True, the Roman soldier, as well by his murderous occupations, as by his brutal usages, had become hard and cruel; yet there was no mystery in his rage:—savage more than malign, his purposes of evil sprung only from the provocations of the hour; they were not profound as hell. We turn then from the bas-reliefs, and the sculptures, and coins of ancient art, and open an illuminated codex—choice treasure of a monkish library. At the head of homilies and prayers, or of meditations and miracles, and set in flowers of purple and gold, we find the veritable effigy of the canonized zealot;—abbot or brother—a Dominic or a Fouquet.• How delicate was the bodily frame and outward texture of the man:—the soft contour bespeaks physical and mental laxity; yet is there too, in the mobile features an indication of that resolution which excitement may give, if not that which animal courage imparts. An abject habit of soul, together with a boundless insolence;—a usage of submission to every tyranny, and an arrogance that would crush a world when provoked, meet in the tortuous brows. Under how many impenetrable coverings are the secrets of that

ὄχλῳ χαριζόμενος ὁ ἡγεμὼν, ἐξέδωκε πάλιν πρὸς θηρία. *Epist. Vienn. et Lugd.* Similar expressions abound in the early martyrologies.

heart concealed; if we are to judge by the wily closing of the lips, and the wrinkled temples! The face, taken at a glance, is the very pattern of penitence and ecstasy; but to look at it again is to find it wanting in the traces of every human affection.—The man, beside that his occupations have not been of the sort that give vigour to the animal system, and cheerful alacrity to the mind, has no kindly relationships, no natural cares, no mild hopes: he is not social, not domestic; but in the place of all genuine impulses, harbours the rancid desires of a suppressed concupiscence. Who could imagine him to be husband, or father, or friend, or neighbour, or citizen, or patriot? Hover where it may, this is an alien spirit—foreign to whatever is human; at home only in the world of ghostly excitements:—it haunts earth; not dwells upon it.

What then, think we, shall this being shew himself when he comes to be inflamed by spiritual revenge, and quickened by the virulence of those boundless hatreds which a malignant superstition engenders! And what when the engines of a mighty despotism are entrusted to his zealous hands! Horror has now nothing worse to conceive of:—the ghastly ideal of cruelty is filled up.—Who would not rush from the grasp of the irritated ascetic to cling to the knees of the Roman soldier, and there plead for human compassion!

Yet is this same horrific personage human, nor perhaps worse than many, if we deduct all that the bad system it has been his wretched lot to live under has done to pervert him. The Franciscan — the Inquisitor, once sucked the breast of woman, and joined in the mirth and gambols of childhood; and even now, if it were possible to take him apart for a moment from his rules and his crucifix, we might find in his bosom the germs at least of the common charities of life: yes, doubtless he is human; and if the sinewy fabric were exposed by the knife of the anatomist, the transformation that has made him so unlike to other men could not be detected. — The brain, for aught that appears, might as well have entertained reason and truth as another brain; — the heart, for aught that we can see, might, as readily as another heart, have throbbed with pity.

System and circumstance deducted — the Franciscan or the Inquisitor may be found in all communities. — Look, for example, at that grave and abstracted, yet youthful countenance — pallid, and somewhat fallen from the salient outline that should bespeak the actual years. What intensity in the glare of the sunken eye! What fixedness of purpose in the lips! and the movements of the youth seem inspirited with some intention beyond simple locomotion, or mechanical agency: — as he walks one would think that he was hastening

onward by the side of an invisible competitor for a prize at the goal. Or hear him speak:—he is terse and precise: his tones too, have a certain mystic monotony in place of the natural modulations of a voice so young. But listen to his opinions; how vehement are they; how darkly coloured his representations of simple facts;—exaggeration swells every sentence: and how far from *youthful* are his surmises; and his verdicts how inexorable!—not a look, not a word, not an action of his belongs to the level of ordinary sympathies: all is profound as the abyss, or lofty as the clouds. But, strange to say, you may find this our instance, perhaps, to be one of a community that boasts itself as the especial enemy of intolerance!—he has been bred in the heart of the very straitest sect of liberality, and would die gladly in the sacred cause of religious freedom! Ah! how like is man to man, strip him only of a garb!—Take now our fervent youth, and immure him a year or two with twenty like himself, in some dim seclusion:—there work upon his passions with whatever is acrid in the system he already holds, and draw him on with a little art—the art of sacred logic, from inference to inference, until he comes into a state of mind to which nothing, the most exorbitant, can seem strange. You must then find for him a sphere of excitement; and without beads or a cowl he will act the part of the worthiest son of the Church that has lived.

We return to matters of history.—By what rule of equity is a balance to be held between the cruelties of the papacy, and the exterminating wars of the Moslem conquerors? Without affirming absolutely on which side the scale might turn, certain points of comparison at once present themselves:—such for example as these.—The fury of the early propagators of the doctrine of Mohammed was that of warriors who, having launched upon the great enterprise of conquering the world, could not mince their measures. Or if we turn to those who in a later age took up the cause of the Prophet, we must remember that the ferocious hordes that pressed upon Christendom were SCYTHIAN before they were Mohammedan, and had long been used to drink the blood of their enemies from skulls, when they came to be taught a new religion from the Koran. The Moslem conquests (under the caliphs) were a storm that wasted the countries it passed over, and died away; and it is to be remembered that the conquerors, when once firmly seated in their fair possessions, exhibited in their polity and manners far more that was liberal and humane than the world had long before seen, or than it saw elsewhere, during many ages afterwards.[10] Of the intolerance of the modern Mohammedan world, Turkish and Persian, it

[10] In the next Section the Mohammedan military fanaticism will come to be considered.

may fairly be said that, though in a sense attributable to the religious system of those nations, their despotic policy is nothing more than a homogeneous part of the oriental economy. This intolerance is ASIATIC, rather than Mohammedan. What but rigour and a tyrannous dogmatism can be imagined to find a place among nations whose theory of government springs from the relation of lord, and slave?[11] Whether this theory belongs to the climate, or to the physical conformation of the race, or to what else, we will not say; but come whence it may, it is much older than the age of Mohammed; nay—as old as history.

That measure of liberty of opinion (we may remark in passing) or of liberality of sentiment and of sceptical indifference, which of late has worked its way through the widening fissures of the Persian and Turkish governments, is not merely inconsistent with the abstract idea of those political structures, but incompatible with their continuance. If already the dyke of despotism had not bulged and gaped, the insidious element of freedom could not so have penetrated its substance:—the fact of its having

[11] The reader may perhaps think that the southern states of the American Union, where no other marked distinction exists between man and man, except that of lord and slave—or of sallow skin and black, present an instance directly at variance with the position advanced above.—We assume this very instance, on the contrary, as the most pertinent that could be adduced in confirmation of the general truth.

penetrated is at once a proof of decay, and a prognostic of that coming rush of waters that must, within a century, lay waste (lay waste to fertilize) the eastern world, from the deserts of the Indus to the mouths of the Danube:—shall we add—to the shores of the Baltic, and the banks of the Elbe?

But the elements of the social system, and the principles of its construction have ever been, even from the remotest times, altogether of another sort in the west. Notwithstanding all oppressions and degradations, the love of liberty, through a long course of ages, yes, during the lapse of three thousand years, has clung to the European race. If some of these families, anciently as free as others, have, in modern times, quite sunk to the dust under the foot of despotism, it has only been by the presence and aid of the spiritual Power—by the Incubus of the Church, that the people have fallen. Popery apart—every nation west of the Euxine had long ago been free;—nay, had never been enslaved. The papal usurpation (thinking of it now only as a system of polity) has resided in Europe, not as a form of things in harmony with the spirit and temper of the region; but *malgre* the aboriginal character with which it has always had to contend.[12] Popery is not to

[12] Every one knows that the several eras in which the papal despotism consolidated and extended its power were those in which the civil polities of Europe were in the feeblest or most distracted

Europe what Mohammedism is to Asia, but rather a long invasion of a soil which nature had said should bear nothing that was not generous. When shall the European families drive the exotic tyranny for ever from their shores!

There is little difficulty then in finding a sufficient reason, though not the sole reason, for the incomparable cruelties of popery; its restless jealousies, its exterminations, its inexorable revenge, have all been proper to it as a precarious and alien despotism. The consciousness of an inherent hostility between itself and the temper of the nations it has seduced and subdued, has made it a tyranny more merciless than any other mankind has tolerated. Even Popery, we may fairly believe, might have been less sanguinary had it from the first seated itself in some congenial torrid climate — native to abjectness and slavery.

Were it true that this ancient, and now decrepit Mother of corruption had actually disappeared from the real world; or even could we believe, without a doubt, that she was very speedily to vanish, time might be better spent than in searching any deeper for the secrets of her power. But alas, it is not so; and moreover it is true that a portion at least of the bad qualities whence this power arises, attaches to

condition. The *termagant* watched the moment always when the *virile power* of the nations was spent or fallen.

other systems beside the Romish Church, and may be discovered in dogmas not covered by her scarlet mantle. On all accounts then we must advance in our scrutiny, and expose, if it be possible, the hidden impulses of that malign fanaticism which popery has so largely engendered.

With this purpose in view, something must be said, 1st, of the doctrine of the Romish Church; 2dly, of its constitution as a polity; and something, 3dly, of its sacerdotal institute.

I. We are, of course, to speak of the Romish doctrine only *in the single point* of its tendency to generate, or of its fitness to sustain, a sanguinary fanaticism.

The prominent article of the New Testament, and that which distinguishes Christianity from all other religious systems, is a doctrine of Mercy incomparably full, free, and available. And yet this happy announcement of forgiveness of sins takes its stand upon a much more distinct and alarming assertion of the rigour of Divine Justice, and of the extent of its penal consequences, than hitherto had been heard of, or than the natural fears of conscious guilt would suggest, or readily admit. This ample promise of Grace, and this appalling declaration of Wrath, may fairly be assumed as the prime elements of true religion, working always, and intended to work, one upon another, for the production of

those vivid emotions, that are becoming to man in his actual relation to God.

What less than the most serious evils can then accrue from disjoining in any manner these two essential and correlative principles, or from any sort of tampering with the efficacy which the one should exert upon the other? If, for example, the doctrine of immutable justice and future wrath be brought in question, or *abated of its force and meaning*, then instantly the doctrine of mercy loses its significance, its moment, and its attractions; and fades into the vague idea of an indolent clemency on the part of the Supreme Ruler—an idea which at once relaxes the motives both of piety and morality. Such (we appeal to facts) has been the invariable result of every attempt to *reduce* the plain import of certain passages in the Gospels. Or, on the other hand, if the rule and method of forgiveness, as declared in the Scriptures, be in any way abused, then will the threatened wrath take a wrong direction, and not fail (from its own intrinsic quality) to produce the most dire effects. The tremendous doctrine of eternal perdition, loosened from its proper hold of the conscience, will remain at large, and be at the disposal of the spiritual despot, to be drawn on this side or that, as may best subserve the purposes of intimidation and tyranny. Nor is this all, for the same appalling doctrine, so perverted by the despot, will take effect upon

his own heart and imagination, and school him to act his part as the unflinching instrument of every horrid barbarity.—The zealot tormentor, taught from the pit, wants nothing but power and tools to render him indeed terrible and ruthless.

If it were demanded to give in a few words the chief incentive of the ferocity of Romanism, we must plainly say, that the doctrine of eternal damnation—*as held and perverted by the Romish Church,* is the germ of its cruelty. Or the truth (such we deem it) may be expressed in general terms — That a malignant fanaticism of some kind (truculent if opportunity permits) will attend every misinterpretation or misapplication of what the Scriptures affirm concerning future punishment. It should be added that an error of this sort naturally follows in the track of an abused doctrine of grace.

Let it be noted that our Lord and his ministers speak of the wrath of God as provoked by nothing but impiety and immorality; and they leave us in no doubt of what it is specifically which they mean when they issue their comminations. — It is the blasphemer and the impenitent; it is the murderer, the thief, the liar, the slanderer, the impure, the adulterer, the perjured person, and the rapacious; or, in a word, the sensual, the malignant, and the unjust, who have to expect the fiery indignation—the future "tribulation and anguish."

Terrible as it is, this doctrine leans, with its whole stress, to the side favourable to virtue; nor is there any thing mystic, indefinite, or obscure attached to it. If any complain of the severity of the threat—let them forsake the evil of their ways, and its severity shall not touch them. Does any complain? nay rather, let him repent, and it shall go well with him.

And not only, in the preaching of our Lord, and in the writings of his Apostles, is the threatening clearly attached to a vicious and irreligious life, *and to nothing else;* but it is employed in no other way, and for no other purpose, than to enforce, or to give solemnity to the invitations of mercy. How cogent is the reason why men should humble themselves before Almighty God, and instantly sue for the pardon of sin!

Thus defined, and thus employed, the doctrine, appalling as it may be, was clearly an engine of benevolence:—it must have been grossly perverted if, in any case, it has ceased to deserve this commendation. So was it at first, and so, in any age, whoever, after the example of Christ—the Saviour of the world, spends life and strength in the endeavour to lead his fellows to the arms of the Divine compassion, *because* there remains a "fearful looking for of wrath" which shall fall on the impenitent, is not only no fanatic, but deserves the praise, and will win

the recompense, of the highest and purest philanthropy.

Not such is the Romish doctrine of wrath; nor such the spirit or style of its preachers; nor such its pit of perdition.—What is the Papal Hell but the State Prison of the Papal Tyranny? —The future woe, converted into the instrument of its oppressions, has made it natural that the inflictions of the infernal dungeon should be taken as the exemplars of sacerdotal barbarity. All offences of a moral kind, even the most atrocious, having come under the management of the Church, and being made the subject of a mercenary commerce between her and the transgressor, so that while he submits implicitly to the direction of the priest (who farms heaven) he has nothing to fear, the bearing of the doctrine of retribution is wholly turned off from the consciences of men; and the genuine association of ideas, which connects sin and punishment, is broken up. The preacher may still declaim about the righteous judgment of God; but in fact, and in every man's personal apprehensions, the terror of justice has passed off obliquely, and is no more thought of in its due place. The future Retribution remains therefore at large to serve the turns of the hierarchy: it is nothing else than an ecclesiastical terror. The Romish place of perdition awaits—the infidel, and the heretic, and whoever provokes the jealousies of the

Church. Let us fix our minds a moment upon the natural consequences of this perversion of so momentous an element of religion.

We will imagine then that we have received and firmly embraced this Romish dogma, as true.—How does it affect our general sentiments toward the bulk of mankind; or what impression does it convey of the Divine character and government? Under such an influence, in the first place, we learn to think that the most heinous crimes — crimes aggravated by a full knowledge of religion, and committed in the face of its sanctions, enjoy perpetual impunity by the means of a villanous and interested misprision on the part of the functionaries of Heaven; so that in fact Justice takes no hold of those whose fortune it is to be born upon a canonical soil, and where, the dispensing power having its agents, pardons are always in the market. The actual state of morals in countries where, age after age, nothing has been tolerated that might serve to correct the proper influence of popery—Spain, Portugal, Italy, is proof enough that these suppositions are not imaginary.[13]

[13] The state of manners in the southern countries of Europe is now unhappily but too well understood in England; for the profligacy of the continent has of late been shed over the entire surface of our ephemeral literature. No reference on this subject need be made to authorities. If it be alleged that the manners of the northern and protestant states are but a shade or two better than those of the south, we shall then have to balance the unobstructed influence of

Yet the dogma has another, and perhaps it is a worse aspect. Imbued with its spirit, we turn toward the millions of mankind — pagan and Mohammedan, whose misery it has been to have possessed no religious light — or a mere glimmer, and who, if we are to trust to our Lord's rule of equity, are to be "beaten with few stripes," for this proper reason, that they knew not his will :—but upon these, we are taught to think, the unrelieved weight of the future wrath is to press.—These, because they have no holy water, no holy oil, no absolving priest, are to suffer without mitigation. Thus have we subverted the order of reason and justice, and have rendered the righteous retribution of Heaven, which, as expounded in the Scriptures, is altogether of a sanatory influence, horribly corrupt and despotic.

The practical inference is natural and inevitable.—If God thus deal with his creatures—inflicting the heaviest penalties where there has been the lowest responsibility; and allowing a mercenary commutation of punishment in the case of the most aggravated guilt, why may not man, in his dealings with his fellows, follow in the same track, though at a humble distance? Who can affirm that, to carry the brand of exterminating war into the heart of pagan and Mohammedan lands—to hack and rip up and

popery against the scarcely at all obstructed influence of infidelity—and the scale is seen to turn a little in favour of the latter.

dash to the ground, and burn, detested tribes of misbelievers—*miscreants,* is not a religious work? If it be not so, then the harmony that should subsist between divine and human virtue is broken. Such has actually been the belief and practice of the Romish Church in every age. Did the feeble nations of the Mexican Isthmus, and of Peru, fall under the feet of the most Catholic people of Europe? Yes; but the mere avidity of gold would not have prompted so many torments and so many massacres:—the soldier was pushed on by the friar, with this very dogma of perdition burning in his bosom.

And yet an inference which had to be carried out a thousand miles, or across the Atlantic, would not immediately affect more than a portion of the people in any country. Not so the inference which fell upon the heretic at home. In this application of it every man — every husband, and every wife, every father, and every child, might be concerned.[14] Especially did it affect the sacerdotal order, through all its ranks, and at every moment; nay, every motive of corporate interest, and pride, and jealousy,

[14] Deinde promiscua multitudo, timore perculsis animis, deferebant quosque certatim, nulla neque propinquitatis neque necessitudinis aut beneficiorum habita ratione, non parenti filius, non uxor marito, non cliens patrono parcebat. Delationes autem erant plerunque de rebus frivolis; ut quisque forte aliquid ob superstitionem in aliquo reprehenderat. *Melchior Adam,* as quoted by Bayle. The passage relates to the establishment of a court of the Holy Office.

bore upon it with the greatest force. The heathen world out of view, then the lake of perdition was to be peopled only by heretics, and by the contumacious impugners of Church power.—" Submit, recant, and be saved; persist and be damned."—Such was the voice of the Church, and such the rule of its proceedings; and the history of Europe during a full thousand years—a history written in blood, has been the comment on the rule.

True it is, that the Ecclesiastical Hell of the Romish despotism has, of late, been closed, and a seal set upon it by the strong hand of the civil power, or the stronger hand of popular opinion; but the dogma is what it was, and where it was. The pent-up fire of its revenge still murmurs through the vaults of the spiritual edifice, from the mouth of the Tagus to the Carpathian mountains; give it only wind, and how should it rage to the skies! The Waldenses, the Lollards, the Reformed of Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland, England, and the Huguenots of France, were the victims, not of a cruel age, but of a cruel doctrine; and that doctrine is as cruel now, as it was in the pontificate of Innocent III.

II. A vindictive spirit and ferocious acts belong of necessity to a polity such as that of the Romish Church. Already we have mentioned the contrariety which subsists between the aboriginal European temper (as compared

with the Asiatic) and a tyranny so excessive as that of the Church, and have noted the consequent severity of the hierarchical power. But this is not all; for while it is true that popery is alien to the climate and to the races of the western world, it exists also, and in another sense, as a foreign power in every single country of Europe—Italy excepted. Need we then defend the general principle that a foreign domination is more jealous, and oppressive, and less placable than a domestic government? Or if there be exceptions to this rule, assuredly the Romish church does not afford one. But the theme is trite. Every reader of modern history must have observed the pernicious influence which Italian Churchmen and monks have exerted in the councils of the European states. This influence has made itself seen in the rigour of those measures which kings, under terror of excommunication, have been compelled to adopt for the maintenance of the far-stretched authority of Rome;—and especially when the skirts of the Church fell over countries that were quickening into freedom.[15]

[15] The native free spirit of the European stock, which in England has long had its scope, has in no age been altogether broken down in France. The Gallican Church, century after century, has hung loose upon Rome; and the papal court has well felt how precarious were her spiritual possessions west of the Rhine and the Rhone. The horrors of St. Bartholomew, and the cruelties perpetrated by Louis XIV. were only the proper expressions of the conscious alarms of the Romish power in regard to France. When shall France learn

Over the same area, or nearly so, Imperial Rome extended her sway; but her instruments of power were visible, intelligible, and readily applied; and therefore admitted of leniency and reason in the use of them. A military despotism, founded on the right of conquest, confides in its means of securing obedience, and is often less afflictive to a country in fact than in name. It must be otherwise, and always has been so, with a ghostly despotism. The conscious indistinctness of the grounds on which it demands submission inspires it with an anxiety that leads it to overdo its severities. And then the abominable hypocrisy of not itself touching the sword of justice (alack, the cleanness of its hands!) but of setting the civil power at work when blood is to be shed, can never fail to render its executions so much the more cruel and severe. To be tried and condemned by one authority, and punished by another, is a hard fate, and can differ very little from that of becoming the victim of blind fury.

Besides, as the spiritual Despotism rules by usurping the imagination of men, and is seated upon their fears of an awful futurity, it will, by a natural connexion or harmony of causes

to blush at once at her atheism, and at her superstitions? Is it any thing but her atheism and her superstitions that have compelled her to cede to England the first place of moral influence in the world at large, and of foreign empire? The horrors committed in the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva afford another illustration of the rule that has guided the Romish despotism in measuring out its vengeance.

have recourse, when provoked, to those means of intimidation that, by the horror they inspire, call up the faculty on which the tyranny takes its hold. When endangered by resistance it will endeavour to regain its ground by such displays of intolerable anguish in the persons of its foes as shall fitly symbolize the torments that await them in the world to come. The doctrine of perdition, as held by the Church, will be visibly typified in the modes of punishment it employs. Fire is the chosen means of its chastisements.[16]

[16] A curious comparison might be drawn between different nations on the point of the modes of capital punishment in use among them. The subject can only be glanced at here; but well deserves a more ample treatment. The Jews had three or four modes of inflicting death, but chiefly used the most summary—hanging or stoning. The Greeks had seven or eight; yet very rarely had recourse to those which were excruciating:—the poisoned cup was the most usual; or casting from a precipice. But fine, slavery, or banishment, were much oftener employed than capital punishment. The Romans, after they had conquered the world, and had amalgamated the usages of barbarous nations with the ancient practice of the Republic, added to their list of penal terrors several excruciating deaths; especially empalement or crucifixion. Yet, if the acts of a few execrable tyrants are excepted, none but horrid and incorrigible criminals were consigned to lingering agonies. The institutions of Mohammed rather mitigated and restrained, than aggravated the penal severities of the oriental nations. Fines, whipping, or cudgeling, were admitted instead of death, very freely. And whatever horrors may have been perpetrated by savage Scythian chiefs, it cannot be affirmed that cruelty is the *character* of the Mohammedan penal code.

The Romish Church, simplifying its practice, has fixed upon that one mode of inflicting death which must altogether be deemed the most horrible of all. She admits indeed, in certain cases, of strangling before burning; but again, in other cases, has used slow roasting instead of burning at the stake. But the three main circumstances

III. We have to speak, lastly, of the Romish clerical institution, and to exhibit that natural connexion of motives which has drawn upon the temper of its sacerdotal order a fanaticism more intensely ferocious than the world has elsewhere seen.

If the secular influence of the Papal superstition be now immensely diminished, and if the engines it once wielded have been broken; if no longer it can breathe the rage of war into the hearts of kings; and if the humility it affected in the twelfth century, is forced upon it in the nineteenth, and if therefore the danger of its hurling a brand again into the bosom of the European community be extremely small—it is nevertheless true that the Romish Clerical Institution does still exist on all sides of us; and that its elements are, in the nineteenth century, precisely what they were in the twelfth. And it is true moreover that an institution so incurably pernicious should be looked at, notwithstanding its actual feebleness at any moment,

that distinguish the papal executions from those of any other polity are these—1st, The prodigious number of the victims of her courts. 2d, That all but a very few of these victims were confessedly guiltless of crimes visibly injurious to society. And 3d, That, while other polities have reserved ignominious and excruciating punishments for rare instances of obdurate wickedness, or for frightful crimes, and for persons of the vilest rank, the Romish polity has put out of view all such distinctions, and has, without respect for rank, or habits, or personal merit, consigned to the flames—nobles, prelates, men of letters, women—children. Nothing at all comparable to the blind ferocity of the Romish executions has elsewhere been seen in the world:—the world has seen no such judges as her priests.

as a virulent germ, that waits only a favourable season to spring up with all its native properties about it.

The errors of Romanism, doctrinal and practical, we are so much accustomed to regard as objects of *theological* reprobation, that it is not easy at once to look at them in the light of what may be termed their physical quality. We propose however now to consider the Romish clerical institution in that light (all Biblical argument apart) and especially to trace in it the natural generation of the spirit of cruelty.

A word already has been said of the moral peril to which the sacerdotal order, under even the most auspicious circumstances, is exposed. Of the several points of disadvantage there alluded to, we now select only one;—but it is the chief, and it is that one which our proper subject points to. We affirm then that the law of celibacy, taking effect, as it does, upon a large and promiscuous body of men, cannot fail to produce, in a certain proportion of instances, a rancorous fanaticism. The broad fact that it has done so, we take as the guide and support of our argument; and turn to the common principles of human nature for the interpretation of the fact.

Nothing intelligible can be meant by the phrase — the laws of Nature; if we do not understand — Divine Constitutions, wise and good, which are not to be tampered with,

but at our cost. To say that such or such is the intention of nature, is to imply that some severe, and often incalculable mischief will accrue when that specific intention is thwarted. The usages of nations, or their political institutions, or their religious practices, have, in a thousand modes contravened the beneficent purposes of the Creator; but never have done so without entailing innumerable woes. Yet is it remarkable that in such cases the actual ill consequence, often, has not been altogether of the sort that would have been looked for; or has not been apparently the direct effect of the special cause. An evil, such as none had foreseen, breaks out, on the one hand or the other, and stretches, we know not 'how far. In truth, the great machine of the world—intellectual and physical, is so intricate, and so remotely compacted, part with part, that when we disturb a power, no human sagacity can say where, or at what stage our presumption will meet its punishment. Thus we shall find it to have been with the celibacy of the Romish priesthood.—The direct and obvious inconveniences and evils of the institution have indeed followed it every where, and have been seen in the profligacy it has spread over the face of society, in the abominations it has fostered, and in the personal sorrows it has entailed. But these, shall we say, have not been the MAIN MISCHIEFS of

the system; for we regard as deeper and more extensive than any of them, the encouragement it has given to exorbitant and inexorable opinions, to portentous modes of feeling, to outrageous courses of conduct, and, in a word, to the spirit that delights in destruction and torture. The sanguinary fanaticism of the Romish Church we trace, through no very circuitous track, to the unnatural personal condition of its ministers.[17]

The true extent of the violence done to human nature by the practice of religious celibacy has been in a great measure concealed from notice by a partial fact that seems to excuse it.—It is always true that, in a body of men taken at random, a certain number will be found (we need not hazard a conjecture as to its amount) to whom, from peculiarity of temperament, a life of celibacy cannot be deemed unnatural, and to whom it will be no grievance. At least it may be affirmed of such that some moderate and accidental motive of prudence, or taste, or the vexations of an early disappointment; or perhaps a praiseworthy regard to the welfare of relatives, will abundantly suffice to reconcile them to their singular lot. Then beyond this

[17] A multiplicity of independent circumstances had influence in ripening the two principles—namely of clerical celibacy and ecclesiastical intolerance; but it is fair to point out the coincident growth of the two. In truth the latter followed so closely and constantly upon the former that to deny all connexion of causation is to be resolutely incredulous.

small circle there will be a wider one, including not a very few, to whom a motive some degrees stronger will prove efficient to the same end.—A vigorous selfishness, abhorrent of disturbance in its comforts, or fearful of the diminution of its dainties, will answer such a purpose:—are there not those who would never marry lest they should be compelled to dine less sumptuously? Or a strong intellectual taste produces the same effect:—there have been artists and philosophers, many; yes some of the most illustrious of men, who, having wedded a fair ideal, have sought no other love. Still more (and to approach our specific subject) the powerful sentiments of religion, have in very many instances, and in a manner not culpable, (sometimes commendable) separated men from the ordinary lot, and rendered them in a genuine sense virtuous, as well as happy, in single life. Such cases—exceptions made without violence, it is proper to take account of;—they are Nature's exceptions, and those who come fairly under the description shall be styled, if they please, a physical aristocracy—born to illustrate the supremacy of Mind.

Now inasmuch as religious motives—being more profound than any others, can never be brought within calculation, so as that we might fix a limit to their power, it must be deemed impracticable to ascertain to what extent they may operate safely, and without engendering

much positive evil, in swelling the company of the unmarried. A large space should be left open for exceptions of this kind; and we should be slow to inculpate motives, or to condemn a course of conduct which, in the eye of Heaven, may not be reprehensible. In times of great religious excitement, and especially during the undisputed prevalence of enthusiastic opinions, who shall say whether ten or twenty in a hundred might not devote themselves to celibacy, and yet neither undergo nor diffuse a sensible injury? Human nature has a pliability that admits of its adapting itself to very great variations of sentiment and practice.

The exceptive fact, such as we have stated it, was manifestly the rudiment of the ancient religious celibacy; and it ought to be granted that, so long as a high and genuine excitement lasted, and moreover before spiritual despotism came in to avail itself of the usage, and to stretch the anomaly beyond its natural limits, the ill consequences would not be extreme. But how immensely different is the state of things, and how must the mischief be aggravated, when the law and custom of celibacy, having come to constitute an essential and permanent element of the social and political system of a country, not merely takes up the little band of *cœlibes* by destination of nature; but is every day applied, by priestly or paternal tyranny, to temperaments of all kinds, and with

a blind cruelty is made to include those very instances upon which it will not fail to inflict the worst imaginable injuries! In thinking of the celibacy of the Romish clergy, we are too much accustomed to regard it under the palliation of supposing that it is an institution which just serves to draw into a company the scattered individuals of that frigid class which every where exists;—whereas in fact it observes no such rule of selection.

The age at which youth are devoted to the service of the Church makes it certain that, in by far the greater number of instances, this decision is altogether irrespective of any physical aptitude to submit to the condition imposed upon the ministers of religion.[18]

[18] In boyhood ordinarily. Although celibacy was not *imposed* upon the secular clergy until long after the monkish system had reached its settled form, yet when it was so imposed, what had been the usage of the monastery became the usage of the clergy universally. And as the monastic vow was often taken before the eighteenth year (for we find Gregory the Great fixing that as the earliest age *in certain exceptive cases)* so was it usual for the sacerdotal function to be chosen irrevocably at the same period of life. Nay, it would seem that ordination, and church preferment even, were often conferred upon mere striplings. Scholares pueri et impuberes adolescentuli ob sanguinis dignitatem promoventur ad ecclesiasticas dignitates, et de sub ferula transferuntur ad principandum presbyteris; lætiores interim quod virgas evaserint, quàm quod meruerint principatum.—St. Bernard *de Officio Episcoporum*, c. 7. Cautions against the ordination of beardless youths are of frequent occurrence, proving the abuse to have been common: Pueri ad sacros ordines nullatenus admittantur, ne tanto periculosiùs cadant, quantò citius conscendere ad altiora festinant. In later times, as it is well known, the transition has been immediate from school to the church. It has been the policy of the Jesuits especially to make their selection of youths from

Might we advance a step further and conjecture that, so far as personal fitness, is at all thought of, there is a double probability that the most unhappy cases will be thrown into the toils of the presumptuous vow?—Who does not know that an early destination to the Church very often is the consequence (in the first place) of a manifest sluggishness of the animal and mental faculties—a sensual and indolent propension, which, though it must cut off a man's chance of success in the arduous engagements of common life, is likely to be no bar to his advancement in the sacred calling; and certainly can never expose him to cruel mortifications in the discharge of its even-paced functions.—But alas, what will the oath of virginity probably do for constitutions of this order—the very idea must be dropped. Or (in the second place) a youth is not seldom devoted to the clerical profession from reasons of an opposite kind, namely a precocious display of intellectual tastes, with its attendant irritable delicacy or debility of constitution, which is foreseen to preclude laborious employments. And yet these very cases (nine out of ten of them) are precisely those in which the most lamentable consequences must ensue from the violence done to nature by the sacerdotal institute.

the schools under their care. The earliest display of intellectual power fixed the eye of the superintendant; and forthwith the venom of the society's fanaticism was shed into the victim' mind.

The high importance of the subject—the incalculable extent of the evils that have attached to it—the actual existence of the abuse in our own times; and (may we add) some appearance of the rise of a general indignation against it even in the heart of catholic countries, invite, and may excuse (notwithstanding the difficulty of doing so) our advancing;—nay, the subject is inseparable from the specific theme we have in hand.

Before we insist upon some more special matters, let us for a moment consider what, though often adverted to, can never be too much regarded—the negative influence of clerical celibacy, as it cuts off from the unhappy class of men to whom it applies, the very means which God has provided, and the *only generally efficacious means*, of generating sentiments of compassion and tenderness in the bosoms of men. Doubtless there are born a few milky natures, soft and sensitive, that, without wife or child, feel and weep, and are kind as woman. But taking men at large, and taking them exposed as they are to the rude operation of laborious occupations, and to the ungentle collisions of sordid interest, it is only as husband and father, and as possessors of the enjoyments of home, that the rough force of the mind, and the harshness of the temper, are broken down—that gross selfishness is attempered; and especially that the habit is formed of considering and

of realizing by sympathy, the pains, infirmities, wants, and sorrows of others.[19] It is in this point peculiarly that human nature needs a softening power; and admits it too. Barbarities often of the worst sort spring from the mere want of the habit of regarding the feelings of others; but this habit is not of spontaneous growth; it must be inwrought by the repetition of proper occasions.

Amid the stern contentions of public life, or under the severe labours and dangers of the field, a man is learning to discard as an incumbrance every gentle emotion, and is arming himself to bear down opposition. But he comes home (and unless unblessed indeed) is schooled in another and a better lesson. Taken even at the lowest calculation, the amount of this counter-influence is vast.—What would be the world if we can imagine it to be wholly withdrawn?—Look but to the rugged labourer, impenetrable and insensible as he seems, and follow him, when his task is done, to the door where he meets helpless playful infancy—where he finds that his wants have been thought of—where he has offices of kindness to discharge:—follow him, and admire the provision made for correcting in one hour the ungracious influences of twelve! Nor is our supposition romantic.—Whoever has been conversant with the lower

[19] Uxor et liberi disciplina quædam humanitatis, at cœlibes tetrici et severi.—*Bacon.*

classes, and whoever has an eye and an ear to catch the expressions of human charities, as rudely uttered or uncouthly displayed, must often, in the crowd that gathers in a street about distress, have detected *home-taught hearts*, and paternal sympathies, where the aspect and the tones indicated only a sensual ferocity.

Should we count it then a light matter to come in upon the circle of the domestic remedial influence (God's beneficent ordinance) with our monstrous institutions, and at a stroke to cut off from a numerous body of men, and for ever, and from the class that are to be the teachers of mercy, all their part in the economy of human kindness? If indeed the design were horrid, the means would be fit; but if it be religious, how preposterous are the means!

Let it only be imagined that the preservation of the social system demanded some necessary office, at once foul and sanguinary, hard and loathsome, to be discharged, and that, to secure a supply of wretched beings to go through with the cruel function, it were deemed proper to train from the cradle a certain proportion of mankind.—Among the various means that might be devised for effecting the initiation of such a miserable class, and for securing to it an education exclusive of every gentle sympathy, and of rendering our agents both impure and rancorous, what measure more efficacious could be imagined than that of imposing upon the

unfortunate band the very celibacy in which the Romish Church breeds her ministers?

We must yet look at this institution in its operation upon specific temperaments.

It is fair to assume that, of a body of men *taken at hazard* from the mass, and placed under the restraint (or rather the *profession)* of continence, a considerable portion—perhaps a third, will very early in their course throw off every thing but their hypocrisy, and become thoroughly profligate. The notorious condition of those countries where nothing has forbidden the natural expansion of the Romish system, would warrant our affirming that two-thirds of its clergy come under such a description. Nay, perhaps our English credulity would be ridiculed at Madrid, Grenada, Lisbon, Florence, Lima, or Rio Janeiro, if we presumed that any more than a very few of the sacerdotal class were not utterly debauched.[20] Now if men of this

[20] The Romanist can have no more right to boast of the purity of the Catholic clergy of *England*, or to appeal to the manners (confessedly respectable) of English priests, as a fair specimen of the sacerdotal body, than modern deists have to take a parallel advantage of the mild temper and irreproachable character of some who now reject Christianity. To judge equitably of Deism, we must look at it where it has received no correcting influence from Christianity. Popery must be judged on the same principle. We do not ask what Romish priests are when surrounded by protestantism; but what where the system develops itself without restraint. Most readily and cheerfully is it granted that, notwithstanding the cruel disadvantages of his condition, the English priest is ordinarily correct in his behaviour, and estimable as a member of society.

sort are to be placed by the side of the licentious "out of orders," then the difference against them will consist in that aggravation of crime which his sacrilege and blasphemy heap upon the head of the Churchman. As violator and corruptor of every family about him, he makes his way, as it were, through the presence chamber of the Eternal Majesty, and, as he goes, formally invites the Omniscient Purity to look upon his deeds of shame!

It cannot but happen that the dissolute priest—one hour surpliced and before the altar, and the next—where we must not follow him, should become intensely more wicked than the secular man of pleasure. So foul at heart will he become, that no enormity can distaste or alarm him. Not often are such men in any sense fanatics;—of enthusiasm they are incapable, and rancour is not their characteristic. Nevertheless, in times of general excitement, or at the call of superiors, and for the support of corporate interests, they will fall into their places around the scaffold, or the stake, with much composure;—and lend their hands too in the work if needed. Nay, human nature admits, when it has reached this stage of corruption, of an infernal frenzy: sensuality and cruelty in a moment collapsing, and the herd of swine suddenly seized of the demon of malice rush on—not themselves indeed to dash

from the precipice, but to fall upon the innocent.

To omit lesser distinctions, we may next adduce the instance of those, and they will not be a few, of a middle sort, who though they may once and again have fallen under peculiar temptations, and so may have lost that *mens conscia recti* which their vow should have preserved, are nevertheless ordinarily retained in the path of virtue by the motives proper to their order; — by a sense of professional decorum, by ecclesiastical pride, and by sentiments too which, for want of an unexceptionable term, must be called—religious. And yet the continence of men of this class is not at all attributable to coldness of temperament. We must stop short of a full explication of the state of feeling likely to grow out of a position such as this; it may however be said that the human mind can hardly be placed in circumstances more pitiable or injurious. Quite unlike to it is the voluntary celibacy of secular men of similar constitution.—The iron girdle of a solemn irrevocable oath, galling the conscience, because a violated oath, and yet not to be laid aside—the Churchmans' prudery of spotless virtue, wounded to the quick by humiliating recollections, and the impulses of nature fought off from disadvantageous ground, leave no tranquillity, allow no repose within.

Rather a tempest of passion rages in the bosom—a tempest so much the more afflictive, because it may gain no vent.[21]

To the tumultuous stage of this mental conflict there succeeds perhaps, either a dead hopeless debility, most pitiable to think of, or perversions of the mind still more sad.—But if the character have more vigour, and does in fact repel the assailants that would tread it

[21] It were better to sustain in patience the imputation of advancing exaggerated statements, and of giving a stronger colour to an argument than the facts of the case would justify, than to do the uninitiated reader so serious an injury as to bring to light the evidence that bears upon this question. An appeal therefore is made to whoever has actually perused, or at least looked into the ascetic writers from Macarius, Ephraem, Palladius, and Cassian, downwards to those of the twelfth century. On the ground of the evidence which might from those sources be adduced, a general result may be stated under three heads—namely,

1st. That the monastic vow and the life of celibacy FAILED TO SECURE THE PROFESSED OBJECT of the institution in all but a very few instances, and that it *did not* promote that purity of the heart which was acknowledged to be its only good end.

2d. That beside the evil of cutting men off from the common enjoyments, duties, and sympathies of life, the work of maintaining and defending their chastity (exterior and interior) absorbed almost the whole energies of those (a very few excepted) who sincerely laboured at it:—so that to be chaste, in fact and in heart, was pretty nearly the sum of what the monk could do, even with the aid of starvation, excessive bodily toils, and depletic medicine — to say nothing of his prayers, tears, and flagellations.

3d. That the monastic institution, even during its earlier and better era, entailed the most deplorable miseries, and generated the foulest and most abominable practices, so that, for every veritable saint which the monastery cherished, it made twenty wretches, whose moral condition was in the last degree pitiable or loathsome.

Now shall we leave these propositions unsupported by proof?—or will the Romanist—the pride and prop of whose Church is monkery, challenge us to make good our allegations?

in the dust, such men will be found in a state of peculiar preparation for admitting malignant excitements.—The very substance of the soul has become combustible—a spark kindles the latent heat, and the passions blaze to heaven. A settled feeling, hard to define or describe, but which might be called a chronic revenge, of which humanity at large, and all forms of enjoyment are the objects, is the habit of the mind, and is always in readiness to be shed forth upon whatever it may meet. Some grateful alleviation of the inward torment is obtained by merely witnessing sanguinary scenes;—the hidden anguish which has so long silently preyed upon the heart, is diverted for an hour while torture is inflicted upon another; and the woe of the soul, which might not express itself in words, or hardly in sighs, seems to be vented in the groans of a victim.

Such transitions of strong and turbid emotions from one channel to another are not very unusual. Few sensitive minds can be at a loss in recalling analogous instances from the page of personal history. If the torrent of feeling is choked on one side, it swells and bursts a passage in another: and strange as it may seem — not strange perhaps if we scrutinize attentively the structure of the passions, it is a fact that the gentle and genial affections have a specific tendency, when cut off from their

natural flow, to take the turn of rancour and ferocity. The spirit, baffled in its first desires, and defeated, not subdued, suddenly meets a new excitement, although altogether of a different order;—combines with the novel element, and rushes on, it knows not whither.

Will it seem paradoxical to affirm that some of the most portentous exhibitions of ungovernable violence that have amazed the world, or have been signalized in history, have been nothing but the out-bursting of long suppressed passions of some other kind than those which appear? We venture to say that certain extreme cases of religious ferocity might be explained (were we in possession of the secret history of the individuals) on this principle; and then would be cleared up the mystery of the union of virtue and piety (of a spurious kind) with a horrible cruelty of temper.[22]—Could we delve in some

[22] Mr. Butler strenuously denies the imputation ordinarily cast upon Guzman (Saint Dominic), of instigating and personally enacting the barbarities of the Crusade against the Albigenses. It is probable that his conduct in this instance was in harmony with that of the Church generally, and especially of his spiritual progeny—the Inquisitors, who, abhorring to soil their own fingers with blood, delivered the condemned to the civil power to discharge the last "offices of Mercy." The point in question may seem of infinitely small moment. Nevertheless, as a signal and unmatched instance of the sort, the character of the Founder of the Dominican order is worthy of the labour that might be needed to set it clear from the misrepresentations, of all kinds, which cover it. The author hopes to be able, in a future work, to give the result of an examination of authorities touching the reputation of this dread personage. We find modern Romanist writers far more discreet and cautious on points of this kind than were their predecessors of the sixteenth century. Thus while the

spots of the earth's surface far down toward its secret caverns, we might come upon the laboratories of nature, where chemical agents in constant turmoil have, age after age, convulsed the abyss—yet unfelt above. Yes, perhaps low beneath some of the most tranquil and smiling landscapes, where no such terror has been ever seen or surmised, furious tempests of fire are continually shaking the infernal vault. But in a moment, by the heaving of the cavern, a new element rushes down, and egress too is made:—heat tenfold more intense than before is suddenly generated.—The very bowels of the world swelter and are molten:—the jagged jaws of the pit are sundered; torrents of fire rush up, and are flung to the clouds, and kingdoms are covered with dismay.—

—We grant at once that our comparison in appearance goes beyond the occasion, and is disproportioned to the subject.—Let it then be condemned as inappropriate. Nevertheless the truth remains certain that the mischiefs occasioned by even the most dire of volcanic eruptions have been trivial, if compared with the sorrows, and pains, and devastations, that have, in more than a few instances, sprung from the burning

Author of the Lives of the Saints takes pains to keep the reputation of St. Dominic clear of blood, an Italian annalist, speaking of the pontificate of Innocent III. plainly says, Nacque allora l'eresia di Tolosa, che fu da S. Domenico ammortata.—But how extinguished? Not until fire and the sword had converted the finest countries in Europe into a wilderness.

cavern of only a single human bosom. What is the descent of a river of lava through vineyards and olive groves; or what the overthrow of hamlets and the burying of villages or castles, compared with the torments and imprisonments, the conflagrations, the famines, the exterminating wars, and the ages of national degradation, all of which have had so simple and narrow an origin as the fiery malice of a friar's heart? Better were it, incomparably better for mankind, that a new volcano should heave itself from the abyss, and spout sulphur in the centre of every province of every European kingdom, than that Dominicans and Franciscans, papal legates and Jesuits, should find leave to repeat the massacres and executions which so often have stained the soil of France, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, and Germany, and Holland, and England!

There is yet another, and a very different order of men upon whom the vow of celibacy cannot fail to produce the most pernicious effects. We mean those stern natures that are, in a sense, pure and clean, but not so much by poverty of temperament, as by hardness of mental structure. They are not cold as water, but cold as marble; not solid as ice, but solid as iron. They shed no tears, and have no power of relenting, because there are no humours or lymph at all in their consti-

tutions. Every nerve is a chord, stretched till it vibrates, and which will sooner snap than relax. There are born a few men (*men*, for they have bones and muscles—senses and bodily organs) and especially do such make their appearance under the wing of gloomy superstitions, who, themselves quite exempt, as well from animal appetites as from social affections, and unconscious of the soft alternations of hope and fear, grief and joy, look with grim contempt upon humanity;—even as man may look upon the most ignoble of the brutal orders.

The state of celibacy, which costs such men no struggle, they will esteem their glory, as being a fit outward sign of the intrinsic dignity which lifts them above their fellows. Celibacy to such is but a visible seal of spiritual supremacy—a scutchion of nobility in the kingdom of heaven. Conscious of immaculate and unalterable personal sanctity (if continence be sanctity) and conscious of a sort of ecstatic indifference under the voluntary pains of penance—floggings, fastings, and vigils, how can they doubt themselves to have reached the utmost summit of virtue?—Their virtue, is it not seraphic, rather than human? What can sully such excellence?—as easily slur the bright sky of noon, as contaminate a piety so celestial![23]

[23] It is surely more than a mere coincidence that the very age in which the folly of conferring celestial titles upon illustrious churchmen reached its height, was the era also wherein the execrable intolerance of the papacy burst forth with the greatest fury.—While torrents of blood

Yes, but of all the preparations for atrocious crime, none is more ominous or complete than a presumption of possessing superhuman virtue. Sanctity of this heroic and immortal order may dip its hands in blood and fear no stain! Illusions such as these, egregious as they may seem, are not foreign to the human mind. The holy arrogance of the soul, so long as it can be held entire, is a warrant that will cover all extents of guilt. There is no murder in murder, no false-

were flowing in the east and the west, at the instigation of spiritual heroes, the interior of the Church blazed with the superhuman virtues of ANGELICAL doctors, and SERAPHIC doctors—and so forth. Yes, and at the very moment that the duty of the civil power to aid the Church in the extermination of heretics and infidels was loudly preached, the fervours of the saints were reaching such a pitch (if we are to credit their devoted biographers) as often to lift them while in prayer many feet from the ground. "F. Leo the secretary of St. Francis (of Assisi) and his confessor, testified that he had seen him in prayer raised above the ground so high, that his disciple could only touch his feet, which he held and watered with his tears; and that sometimes he saw him raised much higher." *Lives of the Saints*, October 4. It was in one of these elevations that the saint received those far-famed stigmas of which his order have so much boasted—unless indeed we listen to the story which affirms that St. Francis and St. Dominic, while together at Rome, fell out, and actually proceeded to blows; when the latter seizing a spit, inflicted some severe wounds upon his unarmed friend. This story perhaps should be regarded as an allegory, intended to prefigure the hot animosities that afterwards prevailed between the ghostly progeny of the two Founders. It is remarkable that, besides other "bones of contention," these very stigmas became the subject of a fierce warfare between the rival orders; the Dominicans having the audacity to claim for their Founder the very honour which the Franciscans had long thought their own without dispute.—But we have wandered from our purpose, and return to it to remind the reader that, at the very time when the miraculous wound in the (right) side of St. Francis was oozing gore in attestation of his seraphic piety, the soil of Languedoc was soaking in the blood of the luckless inhabitants—blood shed at the instigation, or under the eyes, of these same superhuman saints.

ness in perjury, no sin in any sin, if but the perpetrator is inflate with the persuasion of himself being a demigod in goodness. No self-deception so extreme can be maintained by men who walk along with others upon the vulgar level of human interests: whoever would be mad at this rate, assuredly must not be citizen, neighbour, husband, or father; for the duties and offices of these relations teach even the most preposterous minds some common sense. It is celibacy and the cell that skreen the infatuation, and that foment it.[24]

Surrounded as we are in the present day, happily, by circumstances altogether of another sort, nothing less than a vigorous and continued effort of the imagination can enable us to follow those links of transition by which, so often, the stern ascetic, whose devout meditations we may even now peruse with pleasure and advantage, has passed to the fervours of a truculent zeal. These links are fewer than at first we may think.—Let any one conceive himself to have laid down, as he may put off a garment, every social affection, remote and intimate, and to have thrown off every sympathy with what animates the open world, and to be mulct at once of manhood and humanity, and with a sort

[24] There are exceptions. Simon de Montfort was bred not in the cell but the camp; and although, as Mr. Butler assures us, "his zeal and piety equalled him to the apostolic men;" yet had he acquired it all in the open world.

of desperate apathy to look down upon the theatre of life. Add to this supposition the heats of a turgid piety, and then ask whether much would be wanting to open the way to cruel or vindictive desires.

Or let any one entertain another supposition—as for example, that being arraigned on the indistinct ground of some political offence, in relation to which prejudice and passion have much scope, he stood at the bar, and saw his jury to consist of a dozen cowled anchorets, just summoned from their dens of morose meditation. Who would indulge a hope of receiving justice from such a band? Aye, would not a man shudder were he to descry only one such being among the twelve, and must he not believe that the pertinacious rancour of that one would effect his destruction?

Shall we pass from the light and air of an English court, to some pestilent cavern of the Holy Office?—an atmosphere in which Justice has never borne to remain even an hour, and in which Mercy never spoke.[25] The reverend assessors, with their obsequious ministers—tools in hand, are, we will imagine, drawn in even

[25] The author will be thought to have forgotten that the great Ximenes de Cisneros presided eleven years in the court of the Inquisition. Did then neither Justice nor Mercy accompany the cardinal in his descents to the vaults of the Holy Office? Yes, the Justice and the Mercy of the Romish Church went with him there. By what rule are we to think of men—that of their professions, or that

proportions from the three classes just specified. To the right and left sit those of the first sort—*the lookers on*, whose vote for the use of the rack and pully has often had a motive more detestable than even the most horrid malice, and who hasten the consent of the court to a fatal sentence that they may save the hour of some adulterous appointment. Next are those of our second class, in whose bosoms mingled passions, and alternate irreconcilable desires, are beating like the waves of a tempest-troubled sea. To them is not this very hour of gloomy service the season toward which tumultuous emotions have long been tending, as the time when they should get vent? It is then that the grinding torments of wounded pride or despair are to relax a while; as if the culprit (Jew, or Moor,

of their deeds? During the inquisitor-generalship of Ximenes, fifty thousand Moors, under terror of death and torture, received the grace of baptism; while more than an equal number of the refractory were condemned. Of these, two thousand five hundred and thirty-six he burned alive. Or, supposing the whole number to have been evenly distributed through the period of his presidentship, it will appear that between Sunday and Sunday of every week of those years he committed (to reject the odd two hundred and forty-eight) four men or women to the flames! Let it be affirmed that, in the "New Regulations," some regard was paid to the rights of the accused; yet was the entire process a horrible snare, so contrived as to render the escape of the victim almost impossible. Besides, is not reason insulted by talking at all of the justice *of the details* of a judicial process, the object of which was to maintain an execrable usurpation? We may mourn indeed that a mind of fine quality should be found in company with a Torquemada; but we must not so outrage the great principles of virtue as, on account of talents or accomplishments, to skreen one murderer of thousands, while we consign another to infamy.

or heretic) who is to groan his hour upon the wheel, were to take up as substitute the anguish that grasps the heart of his judge. Nay, we do not carry imagination too far;—it belongs to human nature thus to feel;—the sight, and even the infliction of extreme suffering, loosens for a moment the gripe of internal distress. The vulture of remorse or revenge forgets his part to glare upon other agonies, and rests appeased in listening to another's sighs.

But what say we of the President of the Court? to him we must allow the praise of loftier motives. Not since sunset of yesterday has he tasted bread, or moistened his shrivelled bloodless lip. Watching and prayer, though they have not spent him, have wrought up the chronic fever of his pulse to a tremulous height, that almost reaches delirium. Yet settled and calm is his front, and his eye glazed:—the spirit, how is it abstracted from mortal connexions! human sympathies are as remote from his soul as are the warmth, the fruits, and the pleasures of a sultry Syrian glen, from the glaciers and snow that encrust the summits of Lebanon. The communion of the soul is with the things of another world.—Alas! not the world of love and joy, but the gulph of misery! In every sense, immediate and figurative, this terrible personage is son and minister of hell. And now he comes from his cell to his chair that he may again realize, in a palpable, visible, and audible form,

those conceptions of pain, horror, revenge, perdition, upon which the monotonous meditations of his cloister are employed. The dark ideas that haunt his imagination, night and day, stoop the wing to this hour, in which the implements of anguish are to bring forth shrieks and groans, such as shall give new vividness to the fading impressions of misery which he delights to revolve.

Idle, ah how idle is the hope entertained by the cold and shuddering culprit, when, as brought up from his dungeon, he rapidly peruses each reverend visage in expectation of descrying on one, or upon another, the traces of reason and mercy!—Alas, it is for this very purpose, and no other, it is to sigh, to shrink, to writhe, to shriek, that he has been dragged to the dim chamber of the Holy Office:—he stands where he stands, because the men who sit to mock him with forms of law, have need (each in a special manner) of the spectacle of his misery.

Does the history of popish tyranny bear out, or does it refute our descriptions?—let them stand or be condemned by an appeal to records that are open to every eye.

We have not however quite done with the heavy theme of that preparation which the Romish Church has made for training her ministers to become the scourges of humanity:

and let it be remembered, as we proceed, that a just horror of the *system* should generate so much the more pity for the *agents,* even with all their loathsome vices and cruelties, who, age after age, have undergone its influence. The doctrine and the Institute we execrate:—for the men we mourn.

It might well seem as if circumstances so unfavourable to virtue and goodness as those we have already mentioned could hardly admit aggravation. But in fact they have a climax. The practice of auricular confession would entail a thousand evils and dangers upon the parties concerned, even apart from the unnatural condition to which one of these parties has been reduced. But what must we think of auricular confession when he into whose prurient ear it is poured lives under the irritation of a vow of virginity! The wretched being within whose bosom distorted passions are rankling, is called daily to listen to tales of licentiousness from his own sex (if indeed the ambiguous personage has a sex) and infinitely worse—to the reluctant or shameless disclosures of the other. Let the female penitent be of what class she may, simple hearted or lax, the repetition of her dishonour, while it must seal the moral mischief of the offence upon herself, even if the auditor were a woman, enhances it beyond measure when the instincts of nature are violated by making the recital to a man. But shall we imagine

the effect upon the sentiments of him who receives the confession? Each sinner makes but one confession in a given time, but each priest in the same space listens to a hundred! What then, after a while, must that receptacle become into which the continual droppings of all the debauchery of a parish are falling, and through which the copious abomination filters?[26]

It is hard not to suppose that the Romish Church, in constituting her hierarchy, had wittingly kept in view the purpose of rendering her clergy the fit instruments of whatever atrocity her occasions might demand them to perpetrate; and so had brought to bear upon their hearts every possible power of corruption. Not content with cashiering them, of all sanatory domestic influences, she has, by the practice of confession, made the full stream of human crime and corruption to pass—foul and infectious, through their bosoms! Having to construct at discretion the polity of the nations, the Romish architects have so planned it, as that the sacerdotal order should constitute the *Cloacæ* of the social edifice; and thus have secured for Rome the honour of being, through these channels, the great Stercorary of the world! How fitly in the language

[26] Neither the oath of secrecy, nor the penalty which sanctions it, has prevented the disclosure of more than enough of the abominations of the Confessional. The discreet and well-informed Romanist will not challenge evidence in justification of the strong

of prophetic vision is the apostate church designated—sitting as she does at the centre of

language which the Author uses on the subject: the Romanist, we presume, does not need to have certain notorious books named to him in which, with astounding insensibility, the Confessarius has divulged the mysteries of his art. Of one of these infamous books, a respectable Romish writer says, Ce prodigieux volume contient un examin très subtil de toutes les impurities imaginables; c'est un CLOAQUE, qui renferme des choses horribles, et qu'on n'oseroit dire. On l'appelle avec justice un ouvrage honteux, composé avec un curiosité enorme, horrible et odieux par la diligence et l'exactitude qui y regne, à penetrer dans des choses monstreuses, sales, infames, et diaboliques. Il est impossible de comprendre comment un Autheur peut avoir renoncé à la pudeur jusqu'à pouvoir escrire un tel livre, puis qu'aujourd'huy un homme qui n'a pas despouillé toute honte patit effroyablement en le lisant. And again speaking of the same writer, ... prodigioso volumine, velut CLOACA ingenti, fanda infandaque convolvit.

The Church rigorously enjoins the faithful, as they would escape perdition, to make the most intimate and *circumstantial* disclosures of their guilt, without which, it says, the "sacred physician cannot be qualified to apply the proper remedy." And we are not left in doubt as to the result. Constat enim, says the Council of Trent, sacerdotes judicium hoc, incognitâ causâ, exercere non potuisse, nec æquitatem quidem, illos in pœnis injungendis servare potuisse, si *in genere* dumtaxat, et non potiùs *in specie*, ac sigillatim, sua ipsi peccata declarassent. . . . . Without the most unreserved confession, say these doctors, there is no hope of remission—qui secùs faciunt et scienter aliqua retinent, nihil divinæ bonitati per sacerdotem remittendum proponunt. Nor was it enough to disclose the mere *facts* of guilt; the Church must know *all circumstantials;* Colligitur præterea, etiam eas circumstantias in confessione explicandas esse, *quæ speciem peccati mutant.*—See the fifth chapter of the decrees of the Council of Trent.

The sacrament of confession, when it came to be thus explained and enjoined, naturally drew in upon the Church, in tenfold quantity, the impurities of licentious times. Heretofore, those chiefly had come to the priest who possessed some conscience and virtue, and whose disclosures were of a less flagrant sort. But afterwards, that is to say from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the custom of confession became universal; and the most abandoned of men (and women) retained superstition enough to desire absolution and to seek it in this manner from the priest.—Accordingly we find from this time abundant indications of the bad proficiency which the clergy

the common drainage of Europe — as the Mother of abominations, and as holding forth

made in the knowledge of every horrible enormity. On this point it might be enough to refer to the writings of Albert, bishop of Ratisbon—if a book which bears his name has not unjustly been attributed to him. But even long before the time when the SEWERS of the Church were thus deepened and widened, it is clear from abundant evidence that the practice of receiving private confessions had had great influence in depraving, both the secular and regular clergy, and in spreading on all sides a shameless and boundless licentiousness. It would be very easy, could it be done without offending the just rules of propriety, to put this matter beyond dispute. Little more than the reputation and the conceit of sanctity could be left to men who, being themselves bound to single life (we must not call it chastity) were able to write what some noted fathers of the Church have written on offensive subjects. This sort of learning they frankly acknowledged themselves to have acquired at first or second hand from penitents ..... ὡς πρὸς ἐμέ τις τῶν αἰδεσίμων καὶ πολιᾷ καὶ βίῳ παλαιὸς ἀνὴρ, ἐξομολογησαμένης πρὸς αὐτὸν γυναικὸς, ἀπεφθέγξατο ..... nor is this a solitary instance in the same Father (as well unnamed). The replies given by Basil to his monks on certain points of *discretion*, sufficiently attest the evils involved in the practice, even in its infant state; who, by the way, goes all the length of the Council of Trent in demanding (from the monks at least) a discovery of even "the lightest movements of the soul," and of "every secret of the heart;" and by means of an apt illustration persuades them to a throwing forth from the inner man, whatever is noxious. Some of the interrogations addressed to Basil, and relating to confession, are highly significant; but they must be remitted to a more fit occasion.

How far, in the actual practice of the Romish Church, regard was paid to the temperament and character of the man, in appointing the confessarius, it is not easy to learn. But great care has been taken to prevent any but those *duly appointed*, from receiving confessions; and a care also to prevent promiscuous confession. A priest leaving his cure, or disabled by sickness from the discharge of his duties, named a substitute, to whom alone his penitents might unburden their consciences. Among the many instances that might be adduced in illustration of the rule, a somewhat curious one occurs in the minutes of the trial of the luckless Joan of Arc.—Interroguee si elle se confessoit tous les ans, dit qu'ouy, à son propre curé, et s'il estoit empesché elle se confessoit a un autre prebstre, par le congé

in shameless arrogance, the cup of the filthiness of her fornications!

The Church of Rome is without doubt entitled to the pre-eminence we have given her as the Nurse of sanguinary fanaticism.—Her doctrine begets cruelty;—her polity demands it;—and her clerical institute trains her ministers to the service she has need of. And that which the theory of this superstition would lead us to expect, history declares to have had actual existence. There is no other volume of human affairs that can, for the abundance of execrable acts, come into comparison with the story of the Papal tyranny.—If the THEORY only of this system should go down to posterity, and its HISTORY be lost, no credit would be given to the affirmation that a scheme so unnatural had ever found a place in the world;—much less

dudict curé; nevertheless, and although the heroine could prove qu'elle recevoit le corps de nostre Seigneur tous les ans à Pasques, she was, by her ferocious and hypocritical judges, condamnee à estre arse et bruslee, not for having fought in the cause of her country, but—comme heretique.—*L'Histoire et Cronique de Normandie.*

We return for a moment to the influence of auricular confession upon the Priest, and conclude this note in the words of Bayle. Il arrive à ces Critiques (upon Catullus and Martial) ce qui arrive aux Médecins et aux Chirurgiens, qui à force de manier des ulceres, et de se trouver exposez à de mauvaises odeurs, se font une habitude de n'en être point incommodez. Dieu veuille que les Confesseurs et les Casuïstes, dont les oreilles sont l'EGOUT de toutes les immondices de la vie humaine, se pussent vanter d'un tel endurcissement. Il n'y en a que trop sans doute qui n'y parviennent jamais, et dont la vertu fait naufrage à l'ouïe des dérèglemens de leurs pénitentes.

that it had maintained its influence over civilized nations during a longer course of ages than could be boasted by the firmest and most extensive secular monarchies. Or if the History of the Romish Church were to descend to distant times, and the theory of the system be forgotten, then must it certainly be thought that, during the thousand years, or more, of its unbroken power, a licence extraordinary had been granted to infernal malignants to usurp human forms, and to invade earth with the practices of hell; or that the world, from the seventh to the seventeenth century, had suffered, a dark Millennium of diabolic possession.

But while we have outspread before us, at once the theory and the history of Popery, we are able, by using the latter as a comment upon the former, and the former as a key to the latter, to reconcile those notions of human nature and Divine Providence which we must devoutly cling to, with the hideous facts that admit, alas, of no dispute. The lesson we gain from such a digest is this—and one of more moment can hardly be found—That human nature, plastic as it is, and susceptible of all influences, may, by long exposure to the operation of a pernicious code, an immoral institute, and a despotic polity, become atrocious in a degree that confounds every distinction, between human and diabolical wickedness. If then, in any measure, we have gained advantage over

such a system, and are actually driving it further and further towards the skirts of civilization, with how keen a jealousy should we look—not so much to the expiring remains of that same system, near us, as to those deep principles of ghostly usurpation which are very far from having been utterly crushed and destroyed, even in the freest of the European communities.

Yet in the heat of our indignation, let justice be done to Rome. This justice makes a demand upon us under several heads. The topics are trite, but must not here be omitted.

I. The specific guilt of the Papal tyranny is that of having *converted to the purposes of its spiritual usurpation* those congenial corruptions of faith and practice which it found in readiness, and which it received from a higher age, recommended by the unanimous approval of Saints, Doctors, and illustrious Writers. But neither popes, nor cardinals, nor councils, can fairly be accused, except in some single and less important instances, of originating (as if with malign ingenuity) the elements of the despotism which they administered. This main point of Church history has been too much obscured by Protestant controversialists.

II. At once as a relief to the sad impression of human nature made by the history of popery, and as a tribute too to the mighty efficacy of Christianity, even when most corrupted, we have

to keep in view the actual amount of virtue, humanity, piety—and the learning, the intelligence, and the bright excellence of every name, which has existed in all ages under the Papacy. Let us call this amount large—and indeed it is so:—assuredly the proofs of its extent would not soon be exhausted. We denounce the Romish doctrine and polity, not on the charge that it *excludes* all religion and all virtue; or that it renders the *whole* of its hierarchical body as corrupt as it renders many; but only on this ground, that it generates a species of ferocity more malign than any other system has produced, and that it never fails to have at its service a formidable number of inhuman beings, who want nothing but occasion to cover kingdoms with sorrow and blood.

III. Yet the main article of the measure of equity which should be rendered to the Church of Rome is this—That even if *unrivalled* in cruelty, she is not *alone* in it; but has been, if not eclipsed, worthily followed by each offset Church, and by almost every Dissident community.[27]—Those that have gone off to the remotest point of doctrine and polity—whose rule of belief and duty has been—in every article, the antithesis of Rome, and those too that have filled the interval at every distance from the extremes;—all

[27] It would be an injustice not to say that the Quakers are clear of this guilt, and to their many peculiar merits, add the praise of being, not only wise as serpents—but harmless as doves.

have wrought, in their day, the engine of spiritual oppression; all have shewn themselves, in the hour of their pride, intolerant and merciless; and all should look with shame to their several histories;—while the Church of Rome looks, or might look to hers, with horror.

If nations, churches, and communities, as well as individuals, have a future retribution to fear; then has almost every existing religious body a just cause of alarm. If a day is to come when the Righteous Administrator of human affairs, and Head of the Church, is to make manifest his detestation of ecclesiastical bloodshed and torments, shall the Church of Rome stand alone at the bar, or have no companions in punishment? Ought we not to think more worthily of the Justice of Heaven than to suppose it?

Leaving so high a theme, let the general inference be fully and clearly drawn — That gloomy doctrines and pernicious schemes of polity are therefore to be execrated, because, even without them, or where every influence is the most favourable, human nature scarcely avoids abusing the profound excitements of religion as the incentives or the pretexts of its malignant passions.

SECTION VII.

FANATICISM OF THE BANNER.

In escaping from the Consistory to the Camp, we seem to breathe again. Without staying to inquire whether the greater sum of positive evil has been inflicted upon mankind by the fanatical priest, or by the fanatical soldier, it is certain that the sentiments with which we contemplate the one course of action are vastly less oppressive than those excited by the other.

Let but the energies of men be spent upon a broad field and under the open sky; and let them but have to do with interests not of one kind only, but of many; and let but their motives of action embrace the principal impulses of our nature, and especially, let those who run such a course freely expose themselves to the perils and sufferings of the enterprise, and then it will always happen that admirable talents and fine qualities find play;—talents and qualities such as are neither seen nor thought of within the shades of sacred seclusions, or in ecclesiastical halls.

None but minds imbued with the darkest fanaticism can feel any complacent sympathy with the character and deeds of sacerdotal despots; on the other hand there are few minds so frigid, or so pure, as not to kindle in following the story of exploits which (criminal as they may have been in their object and issue) yet sparkle with rare instances of valour, and are graced with the choicest examples of fortitude, mercy, and magnanimous contempt of selfish interests.

And besides; there is this capital disparity between the fanaticism of the Churchman and that of the Soldier—that while the oppressions and cruelties practised by the former are in all cases, and under every imaginable condition—an ATROCITY, destitute of palliation or excuse, the deeds of the other have often been instigated by motives which go far to soften our disapproval. In truth there are certain instances of this class of so mixed and ambiguous a kind, that we must shrink if called upon to say decisively whether the actors should be commended or condemned. It is easy and trite to affirm that aggressive and ambitious warfare is always immoral;—and how flagrant is the guilt of aggressive war, waged under sacred banners, or at the alleged bidding of Religion! But often the question of national existence has been inseparably connected with the question of faith; and the alternative of a people has been

to crouch and to perish; or to defend by the sword at once their Homes and Altars. He must be a stern moralist indeed who, in such cases would without reluctance pronounce a verdict which must make the oppressor exult, and the oppressed despond.

Compared with either of the two forms of fanaticism described in the preceding sections, that now to be considered is remarkable on account of its diversified combinations with other sentiments. Patriotism and national pride, calculations of policy, the motives of trade, the desire of plunder, and the impulse of personal passions—the resentments or the ambition of Chiefs, have all come in to mingle themselves with that more profound excitement which gave the first impulse to wars on account of religion. On the ground we have hitherto traversed, every object almost has shewn the darkest colours, and has repelled the eye by a sombre and horrid uniformity—we have been making way through a valley of grim shadows—or a region illumined only by the fires which cruelty has lit up:—

Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatu,
Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris;
Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes
Tendere iter pennis.—
Vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci,
Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curæ;
Pallentesque habitant Morbi, tristisque Senectus,
Et Metus, et malesuada Fames, et turpis Egestas,
Terribiles visu formæ; Letumque Labosque;
Tum consanguineus Leti Sopor, et mala mentis
Gaudia—

But from these regions of woe we are to emerge; and the prospect at once brightens with the pomp and movement of great enterprises. Empires are mustered on the ground, and the many nations of a continent, in the gaiety of their various attire, and with banners spread to the winds, are pouring on from side to side of the field. Or in other quarters, if clouds hang over the scene of action, yet there the constancy of human nature is shewing itself in deeds such as no other fields of war can boast.

If then hitherto the danger has been lest we should admit feelings of disgust or of resentment toward our fellows, such as the spirit of the Gospel does not allow;—the danger now is, lest a complacency should be awakened which the inflexible maxims of its morality cannot but condemn.

The Romish Superstition has afforded the most signal instance which the page of history at all presents, of the fanaticism of cruelty. For an example, equally signal, of the fanaticism of martial zeal and religious ambition, we must turn to the first propagation of the doctrine of Mohammed.

To profess, or to feel a jealousy toward the Mohammedan faith, as if its rival merits might perhaps bring into question those of Christianity, would be a ridiculous affectation; or would

indicate an extreme imbecility of judgment. The time surely is gone by in which it might be proper anxiously to demonstrate that the Bible exhibits every quality fitting a revelation from God—the Koran none;—or none after deducting the materials that its author stole from the Prophets and the Apostles. The balance of Truth is in no jeopardy in this instance; and therefore without solicitude we may do full justice as well to the founder as to the first propagators of the religion of the eastern world.

In fairness, it should never be attempted to bring Mohammed into comparison with Him who came, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save." Nothing but a summary condemnation of the military zealot and his Caliphs could be the issue of such a contrast; nor does it afford any needed advantage to Christianity. This contrast therefore being put out of view, many circumstances demand to be considered that should mitigate at least the feelings with which we are accustomed to regard the rise and spread of Islam.

Those tides of the northern nations which at length swept away the Roman greatness, might be spoken of as mere evolutions of the physical energies of the great social system; or as acts in the natural history of man, and acts too, the recurrence of which at intervals longer or shorter, may be looked for, unless prevented

by opposing causes of another order. Shall it be deemed utterly incredible that the very same regions which heretofore have poured their ruinous torrents over southern Europe and Asia, may again do so? Must it not be admitted as more than barely possible, that the decay of the commercial and military greatness of England and France—the only European nations that now efficiently sustain the civilization of the world, would, were it to take place, quickly be followed by a Scythian inundation, such as would leave (in this hemisphere at least) hardly a vestige of intelligence—and none of liberty?

Now certainly in this sense it must not be affirmed that the Saracenic conquests were only natural expansions of a superabundant power; for an eruption from the same quarter has happened but once in the history of the world; nor does it appear that it would have happened at all apart from the religious impulse whence actually it sprang. Had not the Merchant of Mecca penetrated the seventh heaven, and brought down thence a spark which set the ambition of Arabian bosoms in a blaze, the very name of Saracen—with all the splendours that surround it, had hardly found a place on the page of history. Without Mohammed the Bedoween horsemen had probably continued, age after age, to sweep their native deserts—a terror only to traders and pilgrims.

This being admitted, and while it is fully

granted that the motive generated by the new religion was the proper incentive of Mohammedan warfare—the support of its fortitude, the spring of its courage, and the reason of its success; it is nevertheless true that a race so prince-like and so bold as that which occupied the Arabian wilderness, when once put in movement, and made to feel its actual and its relative strength, would necessarily conquer as it did conquer, and spread itself abroad where nothing existed that could match its force. The countries to the north, to the east, and to the west, lay as a rich inheritance of which the actual possessors had lost their title by extreme degeneracy, and which seemed to ask to be seized upon by men worthy to enjoy it. The Saracenic conquests, as we assume (though not in the same sense as those of the northern barbarians) partook of a physical quality, and if in the main, conquests of proselytism, were also the natural out-bursts of national energy over a surface which superstition and luxury had already, and long before vanquished.

But leaving this ground, there is good room to inquire whether the project of bringing or of driving the much corrupted nations by force and terror into the path of truth, might not, to an ardent spirit, seem in the age of Mohammed both lawful and noble.

Possessed of the first elements of theology (who shall say in what manner obtained?) and standing

in the position which he occupied, surrounded at hand by polytheism, and, more remotely, by the ruins of three fallen religious systems, was it strange that Mohammed should have deemed the sword an instrument of necessary severity, and the only instrument which could be trusted to for efficaciously reforming the world? In listening to the apology[1] which the Prophet himself offers for the use of arms as a means of conversion, the belief at least is suggested that he had mused in a comprehensive manner upon the religious history and the actual state of mankind, and had deliberately come to the persuasion that the interests of the True God in this benighted world were utterly hopeless, unless at length they might be promoted and restored by the terrors of war.[2] Mohammed

[1] It is by no means always easy (especially through the medium of a translation) to follow the chain of the Prophet's reasonings or meditations; and the difficulty is increased by that ambiguity under which, from evident motives of policy, he skreened his real meaning when he had to speak of the Jewish and Christian economies, the votaries of which he aimed if possible to conciliate. Notwithstanding these obscurities, some such mode of thinking as that assumed above for Mohammed, makes itself dimly apparent in many passages of the Koran; among others, the 42d and the four following chapters may be referred to. An under-tone of apology, in which, without compromising his authority as the apostle of God, he excuses his measures as founder of a religion, runs through the rambling incoherencies of Mohammed.

[2] "And if God did not repel the violence of some men by others, verily monasteries, and churches, and synagogues, and the temples of the Moslems, wherein the name of God is frequently commemorated, would be utterly demolished. And God will certainly assist him who shall be on his side: for God is strong and mighty."—*Koran*, chap. 22.

perhaps had convinced himself that so worthy and holy a purpose would well excuse any means that might bring it about. Christian doctors have entertained the same principle, and have made a worse use of it; for assuredly we must hold the fabrication of miracles to be a worse immorality than the use of force employed because the pretension to miracles was scorned: and again, are not the judicial murders perpetrated by Spiritual despots more horrid than the open carnage of the field?

Looking round upon the world, such as it was in the seventh century, what appeared to have been the result of the several successive endeavours to reclaim the nations from their inveterate superstitions, and their idolatries? Not to insist upon the then decayed state of the religion of Zoroaster, Mohammed saw his countrymen, as well as many of the more luxurious people of Asia, deep sunk in the follies of polytheism. And some of these nations had fallen back far from the position they once occupied.[3]—

—The theology and institutions of Moses, after struggling to exist on a single and narrow spot through a long course of ages, were then to be discerned only here and there in fragments, scattered over the world, like the broken

[3] "Say, Go through the earth, and see what hath been the end of those who have been before you; the greater part of them were idolaters."—*Koran*, chap. 30.

embellishments and gilded carvings of a sumptuous palace, which some lawless rout has overthrown and pillaged — strewing the earth with shining atoms of the spoil. Did it indeed then appear as if Jehovah, the God of Abraham, had any purpose in reserve for converting the world by the agency of the Jewish people? Rather it seemed that the obdurate and infatuated race was, in every religious sense, thrown aside and forgotten as a broken instrument.[4] —

— Even a mind much more enlightened than that of Mohammed (as we are accustomed to think of him) might, while looking at christendom in the seventh century, have come to the conclusion that the fate of the religion of Christ, after an experiment on a large scale, carried on through six hundred years, forbade it to be any longer hoped that the mild means of mere instruction would permanently avail to support truth in the world. A pure theology and a pure morality, sanctioned by miracles, had, as a system, apparently spent itself; — had become worse than impotent; had covered the territories of ancient civilization with the noxious growth of superstition, so that idolatries — more degrading than the ancient polytheism, because men not divinities were the objects of it, had taken full possession as well

[4] "The likeness of those who were charged with the observance of the law (the Jews) and then observed it not, is as the likeness of an ass laden with books."—*Koran*, chap. 62.

of the eastern as the western nations.[5] Could any other event, at that time, well be looked for but the speedy extinction of even the name of Christianity, and the giving way of the feeble barriers which still preserved the south from the savage forms of worship of the Scythian hordes? Mohammed—or if not he, any thoughtful observer, might with reason have regarded the human family as then hastening down a slippery descent towards the bottomless abyss of ignorance and utter atheism. He might thus have thought, and his inference would be strong, that the sudden use of even the most violent means was lawful and good, if so the universal catastrophe of the race might be prevented.

It should now be regarded as a hopeless endeavour to determine, without doubt, the personal character of Mohammed; and it might perhaps be better to direct attention rather to the system, than to its author.—The supposition that he was a sheer Fanatic is opposed, if not quite excluded, by the description given of the suppleness of his public conduct, of the courteousness of his manners, and of the ready and well-judged adaptation of his means of influence to the sudden and various occasions of the perilous enterprise he had taken in hand. This supposition, moreover, it is hard, we will not say

[5] The fifth chapter of the Koran affords evidence that Mohammed was well aware of the degeneracy of the Christian world. "The Christians have forgotten what they received from God."

impossible, to reconcile with the fact of his having sustained fraudulent pretensions, and of propagating delusions of which he could not have been himself the dupe. On the other hand, as well the Koran (although itself a vast plagiarism—a booty, rather than the fair fruit of mental labour) and the political and military conduct of Mohammed, bespeak an elevated and impassioned soul. Those have not looked into that book, and have not perused the story of the Prophet's public life, who can think him a vulgar impostor, or believe that subtlety and craft were the principal elements of his character. If it be true that the author of the Koran has stolen his materials, yet must a man have had greatness and elevation of soul to have stolen as he has done. If, on the rich fields of sacred literature, he plundered—he plundered like a prince. The spoil which he gathered so largely from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures[6] might be likened to that with which certain learned and munificent conquerors have graced their triumphs—they have indeed trampled upon and overthrown the ancient seats

[6] It has been questioned whether Mohammed had ever seen the Christian Scriptures. That they were familiar to him it is hard not to believe in reading the Koran. Or even if the actual books had not come under his eye, the phraseology and sentiments of the evangelists and apostles he was certainly not ignorant of; these were to be met with every where, both in the east and the west. The sort of garbled allusion to the very text of the New Testament which abounds in the Koran may be seen at the close of chap. 48.

of arts and learning; but yet have first snatched from the devastations of war each signal monument of greatness and beauty.

Were it necessary at any rate to offer some solution of the ambiguous facts of Mohammed's character, recourse might be had to the principle that a mixture of incongruous moral elements does often take place by means of a sort of silent violence, done every day and hour to reason within the bosom. A wise and tranquil mind will not rest until it has adjusted its rules of action, has determined what are to be its ruling motives, and has chosen its objects; and (whether on the best model or not) yet brings the interior man into a condition of harmony and order. But there are minds, perhaps energetic, and rich in sentiment, that, conscious of the utter incompatibility of their leading impulses and principles, wilfully abstain from the endeavour to reconcile the springs of action. Despairing to reach, or not even wishing to reach, that unity of soul which virtue and wisdom delight in, they act, and think, and speak in alternate characters. Now the better, and now the worse interior personage assumes the hour, and struts upon the stage. Meanwhile the wondering world gaze perplexed, and disagree upon the enigma—whether the man be sage or sophist—hero or poltroon.[7]

[7] Certain zealous—should we say *jealous* divines of our own age and country—have seemed to think Christianity safe only when

Such perhaps was Mohammed;—assuredly not truly wise and honest, any more than a sheer impostor. But whatever the Originator of the new profession might be, many of his companions and immediate successors — his vicars, possess an unquestionable claim to the praise of sincerity and genuine fervour; and they have left to the admiration of posterity some of the rarest examples of greatness of soul. If Christianity were at all implicated in the comparison—which it is not, even remotely, we should shrink from a contrast between the Crusaders of the twelfth century, and the Caliphs of the seventh and eighth.[8]

Mohammed was crushed under the weight of their anathemas. This mode of feeling one does not so much wonder to meet with among those whose position placed them in actual rivalry with the Moslem faith. It is quite natural to hear a Spaniard—a Spanish priest—an inquisitor, speak of Mohammed as—engañador del mundo, Profeta falso, nuncio de Satanas, el peor precursor del Anti-christo, cumplimiento de todas las heregias, y prodigio de toda falsidad; or to say all in a word—un demonio encarnado.—*F. J. Bleda, Historia del Falso Profeta Mahoma.* The same writer, Inquisitor as he was, does not wonder that pestilences, and earthquakes, and atmospheric prodigies attended the birth of an impostor who was to propagate his religion by violence, and to persecute the Church! The Church, at least the writer's Church, amply took its revenge in the same kind.

[8] The perusal of Mohammedan history has a useful tendency in breaking down the prejudice which leads us to appropriate the common virtues to certain modes of thinking. Genuine piety demands indeed *a genuine belief* as its source and support. But those excellencies of conduct and character which may exist apart from Absolute Truth are to be met with all the world over; and certainly the Moslem nations have produced their share of shining examples. That mixture of crimes and virtues which belongs to history generally, is met with as well in Ferishta as in William of Tyre.

Without doubt (as we shall presently see) every essential characteristic of fanaticism belonged to the temper and conduct of the Moslem leaders; nevertheless it is certain that the military religious maxims, and the usages of war established and generally adhered to by the Saracenic conquerors, were by no means such as comport with the indiscriminate and unconditional ferocity of men thoroughly rancorous, or natively cruel:—far otherwise. Ordinarily (for instances must be excepted) the genuine zeal of proselytism prevailed over the fury of war: if fanaticism ran through the exploits and policy of the martial zealots, it was still a fanaticism that lent more to the side of enthusiasm, than of malice, and that readily admitted a generosity which the ecclesiastic (when he takes the sword) seldom thinks of, and which the soldier as seldom forgets. Or to speak a volume in a word, the fanaticism of the Mohammedan conquests was that of warriors, not that of monks.

Common motives of policy, to the exclusion of sincere motives of religion, will by no means suffice to account for the rule early adopted by Mohammed, and adhered to by his immediate successors, of offering to IDOLATERS no other choice than that of conversion or death;[9] while any who professed the worship of the one

[9] As in chaps. 48 and 9.

God—whether Jews or Christians, might purchase by tribute the liberty to go unhurt and at leisure on their own path to perdition.[10] So long as the doctrine of the Divine Unity were but acknowledged, errors of profession were tolerated; and if the tribute laid upon conscience was heavy, it did not exceed the measure customary with Asiatic conquerors. The lenity thus shewn by Mohammed to the followers of Moses and of Christ, places his conduct in contrast with that of most zealots, whose rule has been to spend their indulgence upon whoever stood most remote in faith from their standard; while all the stress of their inexorable spite was made to press upon the sectarists of the next shade. Let the Arabian prophet be called Heresiarch and Impostor;—yes, but a Reformer too. He kindled from side to side of the eastern world an extraordinary abhorrence of idol worship, and actually cleansed the plains of Asia from the long settled impurities of polytheism. Did he overthrow Christianity in Syria, in Africa, in Spain? — no, Superstition only; for Christianity had died away from those countries long before.

A respect for man, for nature—for God, a respect not characteristic of the frenzied zealot, was shewn in the injunction so strictly laid upon the Moslem armies—Not to destroy the

[10] Chap. 9.

fruits of the earth—not to disturb the labours of the husbandman—not to cut down the grateful palm or the olive—not to poison or to stop the wells—to spare the old and the young—the mother and her babes, and in a word, to abridge war, as far as might be done, of its horrors. In reading these military orders, and in following the march of the caliphs who received them, it is impossible to exclude from the mind the recollection of wars waged by Christian—most Christian kings, not against distant and equal foes, but upon their own unoffending and helpless subjects—wars which left nothing behind them but smoking ruins and a blood-sodden wilderness. Call Mohammed fanatic or impostor; but language wants a term—or if it might afford one, the rule of Christian propriety forbids it to be used, which should fitly designate the Philips, the Ferdinands, the Louises of our modern European history.

The Caliphs possessed an incalculable advantage, as compared (for example) with the Leaders of the Crusades, in not being the tools or agents of a sacerdotal class; but in uniting in their single persons every office that naturally commands the submission of mankind. The combination of the regal or patriarchal, the military, and the sacred functions, in one office, whatever inconveniences it may have entailed, yet served to attemper and

to invigorate each. The same venerated personage—now calmly administering justice as civil chief—now fired with valour and at the head of armies; and now—strange spectacle, in the pulpit, enforcing the principles and duties of religion, would be likely, in recollection of his alternate characters, to exercise the first office with at once a religious impartiality and a martial firmness—the second with humanity, and the third with a liberality of feeling larger than belongs to the mere ecclesiastic, and borrowed from the sentiments proper to the king and the captain. At the same time the people would be apt to look—to their civil Chief with a religious affection, to their General with the confidence of faith, and to their Teacher as to one whose words carried all the authority which Heaven and earth together can confer.

If Christianity be not answerable, as certainly it is not, for the arrogance and the crimes of princes and prelates bearing Christian titles; so neither should we call in question the religious system of Mohammed on account of the horrors and devastations that attended the Tartar conquests of a later period. This rule of equity kept in view, we have to look simply to the Koran and to the general conduct of its early promulgators.—

—And after every due extenuation has been admitted, nothing can be said but that the martial zeal of the Moslem was an egregious

fanaticism. The rise and the characteristics of this vehement impulse is a proper object of curiosity.

In not generating a pure and universal philanthropy Mohammedism was not worse than other false religions;—and in this respect it was not better. Notwithstanding its just praise of teaching, and teaching with much clearness and energy, the great and first principle of Theology, it quite failed of producing that unrestrained good-will to man which is the natural consequence of love to God. To profess to love God, while on any pretext we entertain a rancorous contempt of our fellow men, is the most enormous of all inconsistencies. No ingenuity of the theologian can make it seem reasonable that those, however depraved in faith or manners, toward whom the Universal Parent, as Creator and Preserver, is shewing kindness, and whom He loads daily with his benefits, should be regarded by the true worshippers of God with a bitterness which God himself does not display.* Men who like ourselves are inhaling the vital air—are enjoying animal existence — are receiving nourishment from food—are sleeping and are waking refreshed from their beds, such, whatever may be their errors or their crimes, are manifestly not yet shut out from the pale of the Divine Indulgence:—God has not yet cursed them:—how then can *we* dare anticipate His wrath? The

feeling that would prompt us so to do, or the dogmas that would justify such a feeling, must be hideously false and wrong. Yet this capital flaw attached from the first to the religion of the Prophet.

A knowledge of God is found to avail little apart from a knowledge of ourselves, and unless some genuine emotions of contrition have broken down the pride of the heart, the abstract truth of the Divine Unity and perfections seems only to inflame our arrogance, and to prepare us to be inexorable and cruel. So it was in the system of Mohammed;—it had no true philanthropy, because it had no humiliation, no tenderness and penitence—no method of propitiation.[11]

The Koran does indeed teach and inspire a profound reverence toward God; and it has actually produced among its adherents in an eminent degree, that prostration of the soul in the presence of the Supreme Being which becomes all rational creatures. But at this point

[11] The phrase "God will favour the true believers and forgive their sins," very often occurs in the Koran. But the doctrine of pardon, and the feelings connected with it, are nowhere expanded or defined. Final salvation turns entirely upon personal merit; see chap. 23. At the last day, "they whose balances shall be heavy with good works, shall be happy: but they whose balances shall be light, are those who shall lose their souls, and shall remain in hell for ever." Repentance, in the sense of the Koran, means turning from idolatry to the true faith, see chap. 9. Or if, as in chap. 4, the word be used in a broader sense, yet is the range allowed to contrition very limited. Nothing like a system of propitiation is contained in Mohammed's theology.

it stops. Moslem humiliation has no tears; and as it does not reach the depths of a heartfelt repentance, so neither is it cheered by that gratitude which springs from the consciousness of pardon. No sluices of sorrow are opened by its devotions;—the affections are not softened: there is a feverish heat among the passions, but no moisture. Faith and confidence toward God are bold rather than submissive, and the soul of the believer, basking in a presumption of the divine favour, might be compared to the scorched Arabian desert, arid, as it is, and unproductive, and liable too to be heaved into billows by the hurricane.

No other religious system has gone so far in quashing that instinct of guilt and shame which belongs to man as a transgressor, and which impels him to look for some means of propitiation. The divine favour is secured by the Koran to whoever makes hearty profession of the unity of God and the apostleship of Mohammed. Almsdeeds, punctuality in devotions, and above all, valour in the field, exclude every doubt of salvation. No sentiment found a place that could open the heart to the upbraidings of conscience. Islam is the Religion of Pride;—the religion of the sword.[12]

[12] "O prophet! God is thy support, and such of the true believers who follow thee.—O prophet! stir up the faithful to war: if twenty of you persevere with constancy, they shall overcome two hundred," &c. *Koran*, chap. 8. "Verily God loveth those who fight for his religion in battle array." Chap. 61.

We should not omit to notice the contrast which presents itself between the Moslem and Christian systems on this capital point. All religious history may be challenged to produce an exception to the rule, that the Christian doctrine of forgiveness of sins is the only one which has generated an efficacious and tender-spirited philanthropy. — It is this doctrine, and no other, that brings into combination the sensitiveness and the zeal necessary to the vigour of practical good-will toward our fellow-men. Exclude this truth, as it is excluded by sceptical philosophy, and then philanthropy becomes a vapid matter of theory and meditation. Distort it with the Church of Rome, and the zeal of charity is exchanged for the rancour of proselytism. Quash it, as the Koran does, and there springs up in the bosoms of men a hot and active intolerance. The Christian (and he alone) is expansively and assiduously compassionate; and this, not merely because he has been formally enjoined to perform the "seven works of mercy;" but because his own heart has been softened, throughout its very substance — because tears have become a usage of his moral life, and because he has obtained a vivid consciousness of that divine compassion, rich and free, which sheds beams of hope upon all mankind.

The correspondence is natural and real, though it may not be obvious, between the

notions entertained of the joys of heaven, and the conceptions that are formed of the world of punishment;—the latter article of belief takes its quality inversely from the former. Is it not seen in every country that the Palace and the Dungeon are correlatives? Wherever the one is filled with extravagant and shameless debauchery, the other is found to be furnished with racks, and will be the abode of forgotten despair. And so the sensualities of Mohammed's paradise are borne out by parallel horrors—gross and barbaric, which, in the speciality of the description given of them, could not fail highly to inflame the malignant passions.[13] This irritating influence reached a pitch of frenzy upon the field of battle; for there the question of salvation or damnation lay on the ground between the marshalled armies, to be fought for and carried by the stronger arm. Never perhaps in the history of mankind have the appalling ideas of the invisible world so much and so distinctly mingled with the fury of mortal strife as in the instance of Moslem warfare. To the eye of the Saracen the smoke of the infernal pit appeared to break up from the ground in the rear of the infidel lines, and its sulphurous steam obscured the embattled field.—As the squadrons of the faithful moved on to the

[13] An adduction of the passages may well be excused.

charge, that pit yawned to receive the miscreant host; and in chasing the foe, the champions of God and his prophet believed that they were driving their antagonists down the very slopes of perdition. When at length steel clashed upon steel, and the yell of death shook the air — the strife was not so much between arm and arm, as between spirit and spirit; and each deadly thrust was felt to pierce the life at once of the body and of the soul.

Hatred, which is softened by contempt toward a fallen and unresisting foe, is embittered by the same feeling so long as opposition is offered. To respect our adversary is to admit those sentiments of generosity which spring from the interchanged sympathies of virtue; but to loathe him, is to resent his hostility as an impudent presumption that assails our personal honour. The Arabian armies, after the Peninsula itself had been conquered, scarcely encountered an enemy that they did not look upon with a just disdain. The prophet had already told them that misbelievers were dogs; — and every excursion they made beyond their native deserts served to verify his words. The human race had become in that age effeminate and debauched in an unexampled degree. Superstition, with its idle solicitudes, its mummeries, and its despotism, had at length thoroughly worked itself into the mind of the (once) Christian nations,

both of the east and west.[14] The profligacy which attends a decaying empire, and the hypocrisy of monkish virtue had joined together in the work of debasing and enfeebling every principle of human action. The common sense and the virtue proper to that "common life" against which all the doctors of the Church, during four centuries, had inveighed, and from which they had effectively removed every corroborative and elevating motive, had disappeared; no healthy mean, no sound and solid foundation remained to support the social structure:—The objects that met the eye in the countries swayed by the Byzantine emperors were the cowled tenants of the monastery—the debauched retainers of palaces, or the faithless and insubordinate soldiers of the mercenary legions.

When the princely men of the Arabian desert, great as they were in a steady physical courage—great in a condensed and sententious energy of understanding, and great in simplicity of manners—a simplicity not rude but poetic; when these heros-born, broke their limits and trod the open world, their feeling must have been like that of a veteran garrison which, having believed itself to be hemmed in by superior

[14] Mohammed, it is certain, drew his knowledge of Christianity and of Christians chiefly from the neighbouring country—Egypt, where perhaps more than any where else, superstition had vilified humanity, and had converted every principle of religion into a preposterous folly. The conquest of Egypt fixed upon the minds of the Caliphs their contempt of the professors of the Gospel.

forces, at last descends from its citadel, and in scouring the plains and woods around, meets only with frightened herds and flocks. To dispossess nations so unworthy of the bounties of nature, to overthrow governments so corrupt; and especially, to rid the world of superstitions so absurd and foul, might seem to be a work worthy of the servants of God.

The martial fanaticism of the Saracenic armies presents a contrast on almost every point if compared with that of the Crusaders. Both in the elements and in the circumstances, these religious enterprises are dissimilar. The zeal of the Moslem armies was a passion for proselyting the world; that of the Crusaders was a mixed sentiment, drawing its force from historic recollections, from the desire of revenge, from the influence of superstition, and from grosser reasons of cupidity and ambition. The Caliphs waged war upon Religious Error — wherever found; and the task they undertook was to vanquish the souls of men, and to drag them captive to the throne of the True God;— the intention of these chiefs, though misinformed, was elevated and comprehensive. But the Crusaders (so far as their motive was strictly religious) thought only of a local conquest, and of a definite triumph:—give them but possession of a certain cave in the suburb of an unimportant dilapidated town, and they wished no more.

Moreover the enterprise to recover the Holy City, though aggressive in its aspect, was also in a sense defensive, for not merely did the Christian nations seek protection on behalf of their pilgrims, but desired to regain an inestimable possession which Christendom, by every claim of history and of feeling, might challenge as its own.

In attendant circumstances also the two enterprises greatly differed. As the one was an emanation from a centre over a wide surface, and the other, a rushing in from a wide surface toward a single point, so the characteristic of the first is the grandeur of simplicity; that of the second, the magnificence of accumulation. There was a harmony, sublime though terrible, in the early diffusion of the religion of Mohammed: — the high-minded and never-conquered Arab—the same being in all ages and climates, and much less liable than other men to admit modifications of his opinions or manners from foreign sources, presented himself haughtily on the frontiers of every land—Africa, Spain, Persia, India, China, and in the same stern and sententious language summoned all men to surrender faith, or liberty, or life.

But the Crusades poured a feculent deluge, upheaved from the long stagnant deeps of the European communities, upon the afflicted Palestine. The dregs, the scum, and the cream of the western world—its nobility and its rabble, in promiscuous rout, flowed toward the sepulchre

at the foot of Calvary. The Saracenic conquests might be compared to a sun-rise in the tropics, when the deep azured night, with its sparkling constellations, is almost in a moment exchanged for the glare of day, and when the fountain of light not only darts his beams over the heavens, putting the stars to shame, but, with a tyrannous fervour, claims the world as his own. The Crusades might be better resembled to the tornado, which, sweeping over some rich Polynesian sea, and rending up all things in its course, heaps together upon a distant shore the confused wrecks of nature and of human industry.

The motley host that dragged its length across the plains of the lesser Asia was not more various in its blazonments and banners than were the motives of the crowd; and the many-coloured embellishments of the enterprise as they glittered in the sun under the walls of Nice, or of Antioch, might be regarded as symbolizing the heterogeneous impulses that had brought so many myriads from their homes. But the accessory motives, whether of the chiefs or the rabble, do not belong to our subject:—the spirit of adventure, the secular ambitoin, the cupidity, or the sheer superstition, are to be set off as accidents merely of that genuine infatuation which, at intervals during nearly two hundred years, convulsed the European nations.

If there had been no crusade in the age of ignorance, would there have been one in the

age of knowledge? We dare not affirm such a conjecture to be probable; and yet would not grant it to be altogether groundless. The follies, the miseries, and the ill success that attended the endeavour of the European states to possess themselves of a land in which they had every right sentiment can confer, have branded with reprobation an enterprise that otherwise might have seemed not unreasonable, even to the men of more enlightened times. Let the case be stated abstractedly.—That the most powerful nations of the world—a great community of nations, professing the same faith, should patiently see, on their very border, a land every foot of which had become memorable by association with the events of their religion, trodden down by an inimical superstition, while themselves were barely indulged with leave of setting foot upon it, is a fact that would not have been thought probable; and which, we almost believe, would not to the present time have been endured, if the frenzy of the twelfth century had not affixed an indelible contempt upon the project of reclaiming the birth-place of Christianity for Christendom.

Had there been no crusade in the twelfth century, there might then we imagine have been one in the seventeenth:—not, assuredly, in the nineteenth; for Christianity at the present moment although it commands too much regard, and is too well understood to allow of its giving

sanction to religious warfare; yet is far from supporting that once powerful feeling which made the sacred sites objects of impassioned curiosity. The very reverse was true in the age of Urban II. —Too little understood in its spirit and maxims to repress the enterprise, Christianity nevertheless then held an undisputed sway over the imaginations, the hopes and the fears of the mass of mankind throughout Europe. The idea of a conquest so desirable being once presented, nothing could be more natural than that the crusading zeal should flame out, and burn from year to year with a constant intensity. This ardour was in fact not to be quenched until a long series of unexampled miseries and misfortunes had rendered the design of maintaining the Christian power in the east hopeless. If the war had been so conducted as to have ensured early success;—and success was at one time by no means impossible, the history of all nations must have taken a different turn, and Asia, perhaps, and Europe might, after a while, have met in emulous friendship upon the spot which nature has marked out as the true metropolitan site of the world.

The fanaticism of the Crusades cannot be deemed any thing more than an out-burst of that exalted and imaginative superstition which had become ripe in every country of Europe. The military sentiment moreover, had then reached a pitch which demanded opportunity to

spend itself; and the two vehement principles—the religious and the military, being alike under the control of the sacerdotal order,[15] nothing else could well happen than that some enterprise of conquest, directed and incited by the ministers of religion, should engage the energies of men. Perhaps the Church could not at all have retained her power over the western nations in the quickened condition they were just entering upon, if she had not at that very moment put herself at the head of the ruling passion of the age.

How far the Chiefs of the Church discerned her critical interests when the enterprise was first started, it is impossible certainly to know. But that the Crusades became at length a matter of policy and calculation at Rome is abundantly evident. Still the genuine fanaticism continued to mingle itself, as it readily does, with sinister and mercenary views; and pontiffs and monks, without losing sight of those palpable objects which ordinarily ruled their conduct, surrendered themselves heartily to the current of the general enthusiasm.

[15] The ecclesiastics who attended the Crusades were not on every occasion able to hold that supremacy at which they aspired. A notable instance of their failure occurred immediately upon the capture of Jerusalem.—Huict iours apres la prinse de Hierusalem les princes chrestiens tindrent conseil pour eslire un chef d'entr'eux, contre le vouloir des Evesques qui vouloient premierement faire eslection d'un Patriarche, et par iceluy Patriarche estre esleu et sacré apres un Roy, neantmoins en fin fut esleu de la pluralité le duc Godefroy, lequel ils menerent et presenterent au sainct sepulchre, avec Hymnes et Cantiques, donnant loüange à Dieu.—*Cronique de Normandie.*

In each succeeding Crusade there appears to have been, on the part of the hierarchy, less of the pure fanaticism of the enterprise, and more of political calculation; until at length the latter element had so nearly absorbed the former that the Church could no longer even feign the zeal requisite for exciting and maintaining the ardour of the people. It was just in this languishing state of the crusading sentiment that a new virulence was shed into it by Innocent III. who finding that the effigy of the SARACEN would no longer serve to set the vindictive passions of Europe in a flame, substituted that of the HERETIC; and forthwith Albigenses, not Moslems, became the victims of the martial frenzy of the catholic world.

Already we have found occasion to regret that men who stood confessed as the intellectual leaders of the age in which they lived, and who, by right at once of ecclesiastical rank, of personal character, and of real mental power, enjoyed almost an unlimited influence, did not stop to ask whether the actual course of human affairs, and the tendency of opinions and practices was indeed good and rational, or preposterous and fatal. Were any such censorial function exercised by the ruling minds of every age, and were there a court of public conscience, wherein right and wrong, on a large scale, should be calmly examined, not only might single flagitious acts be prevented; but the insensible

progression of degeneracy might be retarded; and even a happy return frequently made to the path of reason and virtue. In casting the eye over the busy scene of European affairs in the twelfth century, it is natural to ask if the great community of the western nations did not furnish at least some one eminent spirit, capable of applying the simple rules of Christian ethics, and the plain maxims of common sense, to the project of the Crusade. Or allowing the infatuation—plausible as it certainly appeared, to take its course unchecked at the first, and to run itself out through a full fifty years, was it not natural that the few accomplished spirits of the age should at length have brought the entire folly under review, and have stepped forward to disenchant the nations?

For performing such a work of reason and charity, whom better should we look to than to Bernard of Clairvaux? Is his personal ability to discharge such an office questioned?—It was personal ability, unaided by adventitious means—it was mere power of mind and the momentum of individual character that raised him to a position, in the European community, of more extensive influence than any five human beings known to history have occupied. As simple monk, and then as abbot—emaciate, demure, downcast in look—a mere shadow or apparition of humanity, who, if seen in the choir among his companions, would have attracted no eye—

this Bernard had come to such authority that he spoke law in the ears of sovereign pontiffs—made princes tremble, or rejoice, and so ruled the waves of the popular mind as to be able to raise or allay the storms of national tumult at pleasure. True indeed it is that no mind, how energetic soever, could have acquired or sustained any such power in an age of intelligence. It was the superstition of the times—at once profound and vehement, which afforded means and opportunity for the exercise of an autocracy of this sort. Yet assuredly he who could actually win and hold it, must be regarded as no ordinary being. And although the age was blind, credulous, and infatuated, Bernard reared his influence, in the main, not by cajolery and imposition, but by those arduous and genuine methods which an upright mind has recourse to. Learned and laborious; self-denying, calm and disinterested, copious and accomplished, and, need it be said, eloquent, he could well support in personal intercourse with men of any rank, the reputation which he possessed by common fame. If in any thing his celebrity rested on fictitious pretensions, he might without hazard have renounced whatever was unsubstantial.[16]

[16] Not the slightest historical difficulty attaches to the great mass of Church wonders. Folly, fraud, and preposterous credulity are stamped upon them in the plainest characters. The perplexity arises in those few exceptive instances in which men of sense (although superstitious) and men whose honesty and piety, in the main, we cannot readily grant to be questionable, acted a prominent part in the drama of miracles. Not that this perplexity at all

Might not then this potent monk, who had fair opportunity of gathering up the lessons furnished by the history and calamities of the first Crusade, have discerned and have asserted truth and morality, as applicable to such an enterprise, and so have saved myriads of lives, and have prevented innumerable crimes? Alas, instead of thus standing in the breach, and effecting peace between Europe and Asia, St. Bernard, with the Gospel on his lips, incited again the western nations to make a furious assault upon their brethren of the east; and in so doing became actively the author of incalculable miseries and bloodshed!

However little analogy there may appear to be between our own position in the nineteenth century and that of the preachers and leaders of a Crusade in the twelfth, it may prove not uninstructive to examine somewhat more closely the remarkable instance before us.—

—The violence of rude minds spends itself soon, and commonly includes the means of its

implies evidence to which we should listen in favour of the miracle itself;—for this is altogether wanting; but a real enigma presents itself when we endeavour to set an esteemed and respectable name quite free from the charge of collusion with knaves. St. Bernard—if we take the word of his biographers, wrought many more miracles than Paul probably had done. And it appears from certain expressions in his letters and tracts that he did not disclaim the reputation of a wonder-worker. His personal credit is therefore implicated in the business. We must at present leave the riddle as we find it; only saying that Bernard's real and indubitable merits were such as might well have borne the deduction of all the prodigies with which his encomiasts have burdened his fame.

own correction. But when measures essentially unjust and absurd are promoted by men who, having under command their own passions, are able at leisure to work upon the passions of others—when the tones of moderation and the stores of learning are employed for perverse uses—it is then that the mischief spreads and endures. Peter the Hermit was indeed author of one Crusade; but could never have excited another. St. Bernard, who, with supercilious brevity[17] alludes to his predecessor as an extravagant fanatic, not merely kindled the Crusade of 1148; but gave so powerful a sanction to the desire of conquering the Holy Land that, without unfairness, the luckless expeditions which occupied the next century may, in great part, be charged to his influence.

If those of the epistles of St. Bernard which relate to the Crusade, and if his Exhortation to the Knights Templars, could be read without knowledge of the specific intention, or without recollection of the historical facts whereto they relate, one might easily believe that the project in question was one fully recommended by wisdom and benignity, and sanctioned by Religion. How sedate and measured is the language—how temperate the incitements—how

[17] Fuit enim in priore expeditione, antequam Jerosolyma caperetur, vir quidam, Petrus nomine, cujus et vos (nisi fallor) sæpe mentionem audistis. Is populum qui sibi crediderat, solum cum suis incedens tantis periculis dedit, ut aut nulli, aut paucissimi eorum evaserint, qui non corruerint, aut fame, aut gladio.—*Ep.* 363.

discreet the particular advices—how full-fraught is every page with the serenity, the forethought, the circumspection becoming a chief!—and how copious is the adduction of Scripture! almost every sentence revolves upon a text:—the sighs of piety rise in fumes from every paragraph—ejaculatory prayer inspirits many a sonorous period. Yes, here we find the very substance of fanaticism quite stripped of whatever one would call fanatical; and graced too by whatever appears wise and devout. Already we have turned aside to contemplate an instance of the madness of asceticism, gravely mantled and philosophic, in the person of the Cappadocian primate; now we have before us a form not less philosophic, or celestial;—it is that of the seraphic, the politic, and the accomplished Bernard—chief patron and mover of the madness of religious military ambition!

Those who will say that illusions and infatuations of this elaborate order, tranquilly affecting the very elements of the character, belong only to ages of mental slavery and superstition, and are not now to be looked for as possible, assuredly have something yet to learn of the philosophy of human nature; and, not improbably, are themselves the victims of some similar deep-spread error. St. Bernard, calmly seated in his cell—the Gospels open before him, and with the events of the first Crusade fresh in his recollection, thought that nothing was more

praiseworthy or pious than to lash the passions of the western nations to a new fury for exterminating the infidel power in the east.[18]

That identity of sentiment, and even of language which characterises the same fanaticism under circumstantial differences, it is curious and instructive to notice. Mohammed doubts not a moment the lawfulness of propagating the true faith by the sword:—the very same plenary conviction runs through the pages of St. Bernard. The prophet of Mecca says—Fight for God, and he will pardon all your sins, and infallibly give you the delights of Paradise. The monk of Clairvaux, on behalf of the Church, and in her name, assures to every Crusard a full remission of all sins, and the blessedness of a martyr, beyond doubt, if he fell in the holy war.[19] To be

[18] Though carried away by the specific fanaticism of the Crusade, St. Bernard did not forget mercy and justice in all instances. In several of his epistles he decisively condemns the violences of which the Jews were at that time the victims. Audivimus et gaudemus, ut in vobis ferveat zelus Dei: sed oportet omnino temperamentum scientiæ non deesse. Non sunt persequendi Judæi, non sunt trucidandi, sed nec effugandi quidem.—*Ep.* 363.

[19] Habes nunc fortis miles, habes vir bellicose, ubi dimices absque periculo: ubi et vincere gloria, et mori lucrum. Si prudens mercator es, si conquisitor hujus sæculi; magnas tibi nundinas indico; vide ne pereant. Suscipe crucis signum, et *omnium pariter*, de quibus corde contrito confessionem feceris, indulgentiam obtinebis. Materia ipsa si emitur, parvi constat: si devoto assumitur humero, valet *sine dubio* regnum Dei.—*Ep.* 363. The English barons, (*Ep.* 423,) are told by St. Bernard that the messenger he had despatched would not only explain the business of the Crusade at large, and narrate what had been effected, but exhibit to them—largissimam veniam quæ in literis domini Papæ, super eos qui cruces susceperunt, continetur. The Book, de Laude Novæ Militiæ, ad Milites Templi,

slain, says the saint, is to benefit yourself;—to slay, is to benefit Christ! Impartially balanced, whom shall we first excuse, or whom rigorously condemn? The one, by violence and carnage would fain vanquish the world to God:—the other, by the like means, thought to achieve a revenge for the Church, and to effect a clearance of a single superstition from a single spot.[20] Both egregiously misunderstood the Divine Character; both frightfully abused the language and the motives of religion:—the difference is only in the terms and style, and in the magnitude and grandeur of the project.

The eloquence of St. Bernard was everywhere triumphant. France and Germany lis-

exhibits, page after page, elevated and impassioned religious sentiments, thick-set with Scriptural quotations, and the whole purport of this eloquence is to stimulate the murderous passions of mankind. The lawfulness of the enterprise, and its merit, and the certainty of salvation to those who should fall in the attempt, are every where, and in the boldest terms affirmed. Securi igitur procedite milites, et intrepido animo inimicos crucis Christi propellite, certi quia neque mors, neque vita poterunt vos seperare à caritate Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu; illud sane vobiscum in omni periculo replicantes: Sive vivimus, sive morimur Domini sumus! Quam gloriosi revertuntur victores de prœlio! quam beati moriuntur martyres in prœlio!.... Miles, inquam, Christi, SECURUS INTERIMIT, INTERIT SECURIOR. Sibi præstat cum interit; Christo cum interimit! This might well be given as a pointed version of more than one passage in the Koran:—so like is fanaticism to fanaticism, all the world over.

[20] Commota est et contremuit terra, quia Rex cœli perdidit terram suam, terram ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Inimici crucis ejus.... officinas redemptionis nostræ evertere moliuntur, et loca Christi sanguine dedicata profanare contendunt. Præcipue autem illud Christianæ religionis insigne, sepulcrum, inquam, in quo sepultus est Dominus majestatis, ubi facies ejus sudario ligata est, omni nisu nituntur evellere.—*Ep.* 423.

tened in rapture to his sermons: England[21] yielded to his epistles: Europe again drew the sword, and devoted herself to God, vowing to crush his enemies.[22] Moreover the faults and precipitancy of the former expedition were prudently avoided in this:—the counsels of the Preacher, as well as his declamations, were duly regarded.[23] Visions and miracles, also, not a few,[24] sanctioned the zeal with which the preacher had inspired princes and knights. Even to think ill success possible was an impiety. — Heaven audibly blessed the enterprise, and assured a

[21] The Epistle just quoted, was addressed to the English Barons, and the abbot does not omit the blandishments that might conciliate the parties. Et quia terra vestra fœcunda est virorum fortium, et militari juventute referta; decet vos inter primos, et cum primis, ad sanctum opus, accedere, et armatos ascendere ad serviendum Deo viventi.

[22] The apologist of St. Bernard may allege that he acted on this occasion in obedience to the sovereign Pontiff, Eugenius III. in writing to whom, on the subject, he says—De cetero mandastis, et obedivi. Yet even this same pope was his creature: he goes on to declare the success of his labours.—Et fœcundavit obedientiam præcipientis auctoritas. Siquidem annunciavi et locutus sum, multiplicati sunt super numerum. Vacuantur urbes et castella, et pæne jam non inveniunt quem apprehendant septem mulieres virum unum, adeo ubique viduæ vivis remanent viris.—*Ep.* 247.

[23] Beside other instances of prudence, St. Bernard gave proof of his good sense in utterly declining the honour of leading in person the Crusade. His fanaticism savoured far more of the cell and the pulpit, than of the field.—Quomodo videlicet in Carnotensi conventu (quonam judicio satis miror) me quasi in ducem et principem militiæ elegerunt: certum sit vobis nec consilii mei, nec voluntatis meæ fuisse vel esse. . . . Quis sum ego, &c.—*Ep.* 256.

[24] . . . . nimirum, says the Saint's Notary, cum aliquando vigenti, seu etiam plures ab incommodis variis sanarentur, nec facile ab hujusmodi dies ulla vacaret.

prosperous issue![25]—Luckless confidence! the intentions of heaven in this, as in so many other instances, had been utterly misinterpreted. Disaster attended the expedition throughout its course, and a failure in all its objects disgraced its conclusion. But it is unjust, say some of the contemporary religious historians, to affirm that St. Bernard's Crusade, though calamitous to the eye of sense, produced no fruits, such as might be held to redeem the saint's reputation;—for how many thousand soldiers of the cross did it send with a prosperous gale to heaven, to claim the promised rewards of martyrdom![26]

This ingenious solution of the perplexing event did not satisfy St. Bernard himself. After declaring, with a piety we should admire, that he would rather himself sustain in silent patience the reproaches of the profane, than that the glory of God should be assailed, and would think himself happy to serve as "the shield of

[25] Fanatics may safely enough perform miracles — among their followers; but they commit a fatal blunder when they turn prophets. It was here that St. Bernard made shipwreck, and on the very same rock his imitators in every age have split. The infatuations of the present day are meeting a like fate.

[26] Nec tamen ex illa profectione Orientalis Ecclesia liberari, sed cœlestis meruit impleri et lætari. And was not the lot of those who survived and returned to sin, more lamentable than that of those qui in fructibus pœnitentiæ purgatas variis tribulationibus Christo animas reddiderunt?—*Vita S. Bern.* l. iii. c. 4. If the Crusade effected no visible good, yet did it secure the salvation of a multitude of souls, says the Abbot Otho; while another writer assures us, on infallible testimony, that a multitude of the fallen angels were restored on the occasion!

God," receiving in his person every shaft of the adversary; he labours to find cases parallel to his own among the histories of the Old Testament:—he obliquely refers to the miracles wrought by him in attestation of the Predication of the Cross; and then, as the last and best resource, alleges the inscrutable profundity of the Divine Providence, which, as he scruples not to affirm, often leads men on only to disappoint and thwart them; and commands that to be done which it intends to frustrate![27] Alas how much, even by the religious, is the Divine Providence outraged, and the Divine attributes vilified! Every thing is understood sooner than the simplest principles of morality and religion. We passionately plunge into enterprises that are wholly unjustifiable or absurd—enterprises clearly incompatible at once with the dictates of common sense, and the precepts of the Gospel. What may be wanting on the side of reason we largely supply from the stock of faith:—texts and fervours fill out the bubble of our confidence.—But in due season the folly bursts:—natural causes produce natural effects:—the

[27] See Epistle 288, and especially the Apology he addressed to the Pope, *De Consideratione*, l. ii. c. 1. Scorners asked for evidence that the Crusade was from God.—Non est quod ad ista ipse respondeam, *parcendum verecundiæ meæ.* Responde tu pro me et pro te ipso, secundum ea quæ audisti et vidisti; *aut certe secundum quod tibi inspiraverit Deus!* . . . . . Etsi necesse sit unum fieri è duobus, malo in nos murmur hominum, quàm in Deum esse. Bonum mihi, si dignetur me uti pro clypeo.

seed we had sown springs up in its proper kind. How reasonable then, and how becoming would it be to retract our presumption, and to confess our fault. Instead of admitting any such pious ingenuousness, we fretfully talk of the unfathomable depths and the inscrutable mysteries of the ways of God! and sum up the matter perhaps, as does St. Bernard, with a grossly misapplied text—"Blessed is every one that is not offended in Him,"—as much as to say, God's ways are such, that it is a vast merit not to resent them![28]

Of the second crusade to the Holy Land the Abbot of Clairvaux was personally the author. Another, far more murderous, and more fatally successful, may justly be attributed, though indirectly, to his influence. About half a century after the death of their Founder, the Bernardins, with the zealous Arnold Amalric at their head, and too well authorized by the language and conduct of their spiritual father, charged themselves with the business of assembling the catholic world for the extermination of the heretics of Languedoc. With how much of horrid glory these labours were crowned, the histories of the times attest. The Romanist of the present day confides in the truth of the miracles recorded to have been performed by St. Bernard;—indeed he cannot question them without

[28] .... hoc abyssus tanta, ut videar mihi non immerito pronuntiare beatum, qui non fuerit scandalizatus in eo.—*De Consid.* l. 2, c. 1.

discarding at the same time the whole of that evidence upon which his Church rests her pretensions as the perpetual organ of Christ on earth.—But now it was on the credit of these very miracles (should we not rather with Paul call them "lying wonders")—it was on this warranty expressly, that the preachers of the Albigensian Crusade incited that detestable expedition, and justified the massacres and tortures that attended its course. With the maxims of the New Testament before him, is there then nothing that should stagger the faith of the Romanist in these blood-stained prodigies? If the direct and immediate use to which they were applied was carnage, rape, and unutterable ferocities; — if the clew of miracle runs throughout the story of abominable murder, shall a man who owns common powers of reason and conscience, swallow, with a blind voraciousness, at once the wonders and the murders; or shall he do so, and claim to be any longer respected among Men and Christians?[29]

[29] An inconsistency not easy to adjust, belongs to St. Bernard's statements of the duty of the Church toward heretics. In some places he seems to disallow measures of violence; while in others he plainly recommends the use of force. These two points at least are pretty certain: 1st. That whatever he might say or sanction in compliance with the practices of the age, or in submission to authority, his personal or original dispositions were not of a ferocious kind; but the reverse: and 2d. That whatever his personal dispositions might be, he had become so thoroughly the slave of the Romish despotism, that he held himself ready to promote whatever it approved and enjoined. So it is commonly that men of mild

The fanaticism of religious war has seldom if ever been graced and recommended more remarkably than in the instance of the canonized hero of France, whose disasters and death may be said to have brought the crusading enterprise to a close; — for that which the magnanimous Godfrey began, the saint-like Louis concluded. — The extant effigies of this good and valiant prince so well correspond with

tempers are employed by the arrogant and the tyrannous as their fittest tools in giving effect to oppressive or sanguinary acts. In commenting upon Canticles ii. 15. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes:" this Father observes, that the *little foxes* are insidious heresies, or rather the heretics themselves, and adds, Capiantur, dico, non armis, sed argumentis, quibus refellantur errores eorum: ipsi vero, si fieri potest, reconcilientur Catholicæ; — this is all very well: — the Church says, Capite eas *nobis*, catch them *for us*. Yet his doctrine in other places is of a different sort. With a slippery ambiguity of phrases, he gives room for the use of the most extreme means — approves *the zeal* of those who, in tumultuous fury, had fallen upon heretics; though he will not advise the deed; — factum non suademus; — but concludes that the sword is to be employed against those who persist in propagating their errors.—*In Cantica, Serm.* 66. But in an epistle to Hildefond, count of Toulouse, whom he accuses of favouring the heretics of his states, all the truculent rancour of the genuine churchman flows forth; and in addressing the clergy of the province after his return, he seems quite to pant from the labours of extermination; and thus concludes his advices. — Deprehensi sunt lupi .... deprehensi, sed non comprehensi. Propterea dilectissimi, *persequimini* et *comprehendite* eos: et nolite desistere, donec PENITUS DEPEREANT, et diffugiant de cunctis finibus vestris, quia non est tutum dormire vicinis serpentibus.—*Ep.* 242 *ad* TOLOSANOS, *post reditum suum*. Such are the strains of ecclesiastics, even some of the best of them, when irritated by opposition. The reader will not fail to notice the indulgent distinction which the good abbot observes between wolves and foxes. In the sense of Bishop Fouquet, the men, women, and children of a city belonged indiscriminately to the former class, if heresy was harboured at all among them.

his recorded actions that we cannot but look upon them as authentic.[30] What mildness and dignity—goodness, humility, and yet fire and strength beam from the countenance! It is a face which for suavity might belong to the most refined ages;—a face shining with a religious elevation seldom indeed exhibited in the series of royal portraits. And such in truth was Louis IX. Disinterested to a fault in his conduct toward neighbouring powers;—a peacemaker, and an arbitrator inflexibly just. Industrious in the discharge of public business, lenient and moderate in exacting dues, accessible and gracious to the poor: — firm toward the proud and powerful. Irreproachable in private life — temperate and chaste. And withal, a warrior of no mean reputation—justly admired as well on account of his personal valour, as of his conduct in the field: — chivalrous in the best sense of the term; and pious in a sense at which the severity of modern notions must not cavil.[31]

What then does our hero want—unless it be that integrity and vigour of reason of which the superstition of his age had cashiered him?

[30] Several portraits of St. Louis, and some of them well executed, are extant (or were so before the revolution) in the Churches dedicated to him, as well as in MSS. These are to be seen in Montfaucon's Antiquities of France.

[31] Louis IX. succeeded his father in 1226, and was only in his fourteenth year, and subject to the queen mother, when he acted his part in the abominable conduct of the Church and Court towards Raymond VII.

If one might bring St. Louis into parallel with the statesmen and warriors of classical history—an Epaminondas or Timoleon, a Scipio or a Marius, though he claims over them the advantage of some higher sentiments and purer morals, he must yield to them all the prerogatives of that erect position of the soul which belonged to them (although superstitious in their way) as exempt from the humiliation inflicted by sacerdotal despotism.—The Grecian and Roman public worship stood subservient to the civil and military powers of the state; while that of the Christian nations (of the middle ages) not merely usurped every kind of influence, but, with the arrogance fitting infinite pretensions, trod the very souls of men in the dust. Strong emotions of shame and indignation spring up in the mind—shame for the degradations of humanity, shame for the abused religion of Christ, when one suddenly turns from the sculptures that have brought down to our times the forms of the Grecian chiefs, and inspects the mosaics, the parchments, the painted windows, and the bas-reliefs, in which the magnanimous Louis is shewn, stripped to the waist like a vagabond thief, and patiently receiving from the hands of emasculate monks the discipline of the whip! Or shall we contemplate the monarch of France —not only king, but soldier and statesman, followed by the bevy of his court, and a swarm

of ecclesiastics, on the road before Sens, pacing the rugged ground barefoot, on his way to meet —was it some delegate from the upper world— some minister of heaven before whom mortality must tremble, and the pride of kings fall in the dust?—No—nothing but a relic, and this relic, *not a relic;* but the palpable work of monkish knavery.[32]

Far from being a farcical or a politic compliance with the usages of the times, these acts of devotion were, on the part of Louis IX. unquestionably the result of his sincere and profound convictions. So likewise were his Crusades;—the infatuation had thoroughly worked itself into his soul; and every part of his conduct in the two disastrous expeditions—the one to Egypt and Syria, and the other to the African coast, exhibits the resolution, the consistency, and the greatness which distinguish vigorous minds when ruled by some single and paramount motive. This motive was, in many important respects, unlike that which had impelled the Crusaders of the preceding century. The course of events had insensibly given to the oriental

[32] St. Louis, receiving the grace of penitence, is one of the subjects represented upon the windows of the vestry of St. Denis. Baldwin II. Latin emperor of Constantinople, in acknowledgment of the French king's bounties to the Christians of Palestine sent him—the crown of thorns, which had been preserved in the imperial palace; but which the Venetians had lately held as a pledge for a loan. Louis discharged this debt, and received the sacred treasure. Single thorns broken off, were forthwith conferred upon several of the Churches and Abbeys of France.

war another and a new character. With Godfrey, Robert of Normandy, and Tancred, the project was aggressive and spontaneous; but after the Christian powers had made a permanent lodgement in Palestine, and naturalized themselves there, it became at once a duty of humanity, and a demand of public justice to defend the oriental colonies. Accordingly we now hear much more than at first, of the obligation to protect and to *rescue* the afflicted Christians of the eastern church; and it is this plea, rather than any motive of a fanatical or superstitious kind, which was employed in the time of St. Louis to quicken the zeal of princes and adventurers.[33]

In this light mainly did the French monarch regard the expeditions he conducted; and it would be harsh indeed to affirm that those attempts might not appear to him in the fullest degree justifiable. And moreover, as the final motive had gradually become of a different sort, so were the immediate excitements very unlike that which impelled the earlier invasions of the Holy Land. *Then* the torrent of war poured on directly to the revered centre of devotion. Although the route was unavoidably circuitous, still the line of movement tended always towards

[33] We must revert to St. Bernard to do him the justice of saying, that, even a full century before the time of Louis IX. the plea of relieving and defending the Syrian Christians was employed as an auxiliary motive for undertaking the Crusade. Tempus et opus est existimo ambos educi in *defensionem* orientalis ecclesiæ.

the sacred sites. The enthusiasm of the enterprise mounted up therefore at every step of the march;—nor did it abate until the soldiers of the cross had waded through rivers of Moslem blood in their way to the foot of Zion.

But how much must the crusading zeal have sunk, and how much must it have mingled with secondary motives, when, instead of rushing on to the endeared and outraged city of human redemption, the crusards had first to assail the enemy in some quarter far remote from those spots; for instance, along the banks of the Nile, or upon the burning sands of the Numidian coast, and fifteen hundred miles from the Holy City! and as the impulse was by this means slackened, so probably room might be left for emotions of a better and a calmer sort. This was certainly the case with the French king. The superstitions of his times apart, for which St. Louis was not responsible, his last hours exhibited whatever is becoming to the faith and temper of a dying Christian.

As well Royal pride (if any sparks of such a feeling lingered in the bosom of this religious king) as the ordinary excitements attendant upon a martial enterprise, were fallen at that moment to the very lowest ebb. After winning some laurels of little value, the crusaders, at the season of insufferable heat, had encamped upon the desert within sight of Tunis. But they had scarcely began to rest when pestilence

broke out, and threatened to leave the residue of the army at the mercy of an infuriated foe. One of the first to fall was the son of the king—designated from his cradle to sorrow.[34] Over his grave Louis himself sickened, and his frame, already wasted by a long course of austerities, at once gave way. Earthly hopes of every kind were waning fast. — This second expedition, which should have redeemed the calamities of the first, it was now certain must be frustrated :—even whether space would be secured for giving Christian rites to the dying and the dead was doubtful :—whether a wreck of the flower of France would return to tell the tale of disaster seemed uncertain. Horrors thickened on every side; and worse horrors impended. But though the earth itself should remove, and the foundations of things sublunary be broken, the dying monarch admitted no despondency : — the surrounding gloom did not darken his soul. His energies as a man, his solicitudes as a king, his affection as a father, his zeal as a Christian, were not relaxed. Whatever the exigency of the time demanded to be done or arranged, he completed. His last acts as a sovereign were directed to the long desired object of reconciling the Latin and Greek Churches; and having surrendered his kingdom, with wise and pious advices, to his son,

[34] John Tristan, born in Egypt at the time of his father's captivity.

he closed his eyes on worldly pomps, in calm, if not assured hope of entering, in due season, upon the joys of eternity.—

—So is the grace of heaven wont to relieve the darkest histories of the follies and crimes of nations, by unsullied instances of piety and goodness.

The rule of analogy leads on by natural transitions from scene to scene, making it necessary to traverse the order of Time. Commencing with the most complete instance of spontaneous or aggressive religious warfare, we have passed to those enterprises that were of a mixed kind, and have followed them until they assumed a defensive aspect. We start anew then from this point to contemplate the memorable example of a nation gathering its strength to a convulsive and frenzied effort for the rescue of its ancient and impassioned religious hopes.

As the terrible catastrophe of the Jewish city and people is fraught with horrors beyond perhaps any other scene of history, so did the sentiments then called up—the fanaticism of national pride, reach a height to which no parallel can be found. An examination of the moral condition and political circumstances of the Jewish community at the time is quite necessary if we would either read the dismal story with intelligence, or afford to the infatuated sufferers that measure of sympathy which they may well

claim. And with this view it is moreover indispensable that we should dismiss, for a moment at least, those special feelings with which, as CHRISTIANS, we are accustomed to contemplate the vengeance that overtook the betrayers and murderers of the Lord, and the obdurate enemies of his gospel.

Yet is it difficult to disengage the mind from those impressions which give to the events of the Jewish war their supernatural character; in truth this stamp of extraordinary interposition is imprinted upon every transaction of the time:—the rebellion itself—the madness of the endeavour, on the part of so feeble a state, to resist the undivided force of the Roman Empire — the pertinacity of the resistance — the frenzy of the intestine feuds, and the delirium of the last struggle, bear the marks of a judicial abandonment: while, on the other side, the singular conduct of the Roman authorities, as well as many incidents of the siege and capture of the city, exhibit visibly—must we not admit, the irresistible control of a hand from above. Looking upon the city, overshadowed by the bursting cloud of fate, the seals of Divine wrath are seen upon its palaces; and one believes to hear the sullen thunder that announces the departure of Jehovah from the ancient place of His rest.—Or turning toward the encircling armies, the Roman banners appear to bear an inscription,

bespeaking Titus as the minister of the predicted wrath of God.

It need not be feared lest, while affording in this instance a due commiseration to an unhappy people, we should make ourselves sharers in their peculiar guilt. Every reader of Jewish history learns to distinguish between the *ordinary* and the *theological* aspect of the calamities that have followed the race. Who that has the heart of a man hesitates to take part with the persecuted Israelite against the inquisitor; or who would stand aloof a moment, if an occasion offered for defending him from the wanton ferocity of the feudal baron or the Romish priest? And yet these very sufferings, and all the miseries that have pursued the people in the lands of their dispersion, are as truly a retribution from heaven of their national unbelief, as were the famine, the pestilence, and the carnage that attended the overthrow of Jerusalem. If it be lawful to think and speak with indulgence and compassion of the Jew of the tenth and fifteenth centuries, it is so to feel the same in regard to his ancestor of the age of Vespasian. Do we want a sanction for sentiments of this kind?—we receive one that is absolute and conclusive from the example of the Messiah himself, who when, with prophetic eye, he beheld the city as if then torrents of blood were pouring down from its gates, "wept over it;" and without forgetting its crimes, lamented its miseries.

The fanaticism which came to its paroxysm in the Jewish war demands to be traced in its growth, and watched in its several stages of enhancement. To do so is nothing more than an act of justice toward the fallen people; and moreover the subject has (as we shall afterwards see) a special and very important bearing upon a question which arises concerning the influence of the Mosaic and prophetic dispensation in forming the national character.

After a schooling of almost a thousand years (from Moses to Daniel) a discipline in which was mingled every means of grace and judgment; yet attended with only partial or temporary success, the Hebrew people had at length firmly embraced—never again to lose it, that first lesson of theology which it was the main design of the Mosaic institution to convey. Ever propense to the degrading service of fictitious divinities while secluded among the glens of Palestine, and while their obedience might have ensured their peace, the nation, when at last transported to the very Pandemonium of idol-worship, sickened, as in a moment, of its inveterate error, and with a sudden and final revulsion of heart, learned to loathe the very names of the gods of the nations. Singular revolution!—the Jew in Babylon, while losing the ancient and sacred language of his religion—the language of the law and the prophets, and while acquiring in its stead a dialect which,

according to the ordinary course of human affairs, should have infected him more deeply than ever with polytheistic notions, learned the true sense of Moses and the prophets! Thus, in forgetting the letter of Scripture, he got possession of its spirit.

Become at length devoted and sincere worshippers of the God of their fathers, and punctilious observers of the ancient ritual, and now restored to their city and land, it seemed as if the Jewish people was setting out under auspicious circumstances to run that course of national obedience and consequent prosperity which should render it a visible and perpetual witness in the eye of all nations for a pure theology. Now were bright predictions to be fulfilled, and now was the world to admire a people loved of God—a royal priesthood — an exemplar of wisdom, virtue, and felicity!

So it might have been thought; but the hour was come for an occult law of retribution—a latent principle of the spiritual economy, to take effect upon the chosen race. Those who, age after age, had contemned the Divine promise of temporal prosperity as the reward of religious obedience, and had so long and so perversely "sinned against their own mercies," were now to be dealt with on a different rule — a rule which drew its reason from higher purposes than heretofore had been regarded. The Jewish people were indeed at this time willing to main-

tain the honours of Jehovah; and they were allowed to do so:—yet it must be under the condition (for the most part) of tribulation and oppression. The economy of earthly benefits which had remained in force under Solomon, Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, was superannuated, and was displaced by an economy of motives of a more elevated order.—Antiochus is suffered to try the faith and constancy of those whose faithless fathers had been given into the hand of Assyrian and Babylonian oppressors.

This change in the character of events cannot be contemplated without perceiving that the dawn of a day of immortal hope was just then breaking upon the mountains of Judæa; a precursive trial was therefore to be made of that higher order of things, and of that more perfect discipline wherein the welfare of the soul was to take precedence of that of the body—the spiritual to be preferred to the natural—and Eternity to be more accounted of than Time.

A marked, and a correspondent change took place at this era of Jewish history in the sentiments of the people, and especially of their chiefs. Instead of talking exclusively (as heretofore) of immediate and political deliverance, and of national aggrandizement, they mixed with such secular hopes, views of a more refined and prospective sort. They had gradually learned to look through the dim shadows of death for the rewards of piety;—they turned their eye

from the hills of Palestine, and with a steady courage endured torments and met death — that they might obtain "a better resurrection."[35] Not a less remarkable revolution of feeling was this than that of their final abandonment of polytheism. — It was in truth a progression of the national mind;—and a progression that involved the remote and universal destinies of the human family; for in the history and fate of the race of Abraham the history and fate of all nations are bound up.

The acquisition of the belief of a future life, and of its infinite rewards and punishments as a popular dogma, deepened and expanded to an immense extent the range of the religious emotions. The Jew of the Asmonean era had become capable of sustaining a part of spiritual heroism such as his ancestors of the time of David had never thought of. The "mighty threes"[36] of that pristine age were indeed valiant as warriors, and faithful too as champions of the God of Israel; but Judas Maccabeus, his companions and his successors, drew the motives of their constancy from considerations far more recondite and potent; and they fought and bled not merely as soldiers, but as martyrs.[37]

[35] 2 Mac. vii. [36] 2 Sam. xxiii.

[37] The spirit of the Jews of this period, and their religious opinions, are to be learned much better from the two books of Maccabees, than from the polite pages of Josephus, who takes vast pains so to dress up the homely piety of his ancestors in hellenic phrases, as should render

It was natural, as this expansion of the religious notions of the Jews took place under circumstances of extreme national trouble, and reached its maturity while they were struggling for their political and religious existence, that it should bring with it those tumultuary feelings which are provoked, as well in vulgar as in noble minds, by witnessing wanton violations of sacred things, persons, places, and usages. During the three centuries preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and while, with transient intermissions, this nation of true worshippers was contending against the Macedonian, Syrian, and Egyptian kings, or fretting under the pressure of the Roman power, there was going on a slow accumulation upon the national mind of those emotions—intense, profound, and ungovernable, which, after many a portentous heave, at last burst forth and spread a universal ruin.

But this progression of religious feeling passed beyond its sound state;—the ripening reached

it inoffensive to his Gentile friends and readers. The simple language of faith and pious hope—hope of a better life, the learned author of the Antiquities translates into the dialect of Grecian philosophy and Grecian heroism. This is especially to be observed in the speeches of the Jewish worthies. With no other materials than what he obtained from the books of the Maccabees, he expands and embellishes the simple, affecting, and vigorous expressions of devout patriotism which he there found, and is fain to present his readers with rhetorical harangues, after the fashion of Thucydides. The same intention is copiously displayed in the Book of the Government of Reason.

corruption. The people, while they firmly retained whatever was acrimonious in their national ideas, and whatever might engender spiritual arrogance, cast off those purer and nobler sentiments that had once imparted to their character the dignity and moderation of true virtue. Thus, although their external allegiance to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, remained irritably stedfast, and although they haughtily challenged every point of honour that belonged to them as the only depositaries in the world of an unsullied religion, they renounced those expansive sentiments, so frequently introduced by the prophets, which have a benign aspect toward all the families of mankind.[38]

Nor was this all—though indeed it might have been enough; for the zealot nation, scrupulous practitioners of whatever in the Mosaic institutions tended to insulate them from the

[38] Josephus, who never forgets his solicitude to propitiate the Roman government, and to conciliate Gentile readers, takes pains to conceal that contempt which his countrymen indulged toward the polytheistic world. He even denies in a formal manner that the Jews allowed themselves to condemn or ridicule other modes of worship. "For my own part, I do not bring into question other men's religious practices. In truth, it belongs to us as a people to preserve our own usages;—not to inculpate those of other nations. And our legislator expressly forbade our either ridiculing or defaming those whom the nations around us regard as divinities."—*Against Apion*, b. 2. This was a bold assertion, and one which his adversary might have easily refuted. Are not the gods of the heathen contemptuously handled by David and the prophets? and are not the worshippers of stocks and stones declared to be stupid and absurd? This scorn of idols and idolaters had increased, not diminished, among the Jews.

community of mankind, loaded those institutions with offensive exaggerations; and, moreover to a great extent superseded the genuine precepts of the Pentateuch by a comment and tradition abominably perverse. So it was that the whole repulsive rigidity of sectarism wrapped them about as a garment; while they held few or none of the compensations of a purer morality. At once, and in an extreme degree, sanctimonious and debauched, the Jews (of the Christian era) were in that very state which, more than any other, is liable to pass into violence. Who so furious and rabid as the scrupulous, immoral religionist, heated by a sense of injury and insult?

One element more, and only one remained to fit the Jewish people for the terrible part they were to act in bringing on the catastrophe of the state. This was the spirit of faction, and this they had admitted to the full. The rise of the rancour of religious strife is a subject too extensive to be entered upon in this place; but it is one that might well claim deliberate attention; and the more so, because these virulent and peculiar feelings which seemed for the first time to break out upon human nature about a century before the birth of Christ, have ever since (and to the present day) kept their place, and have had a great share in determining the course of events throughout Christendom. At present it may suffice to advert to the fact that, at the

time we are speaking of, the bosom of almost every Jew, beside the common malevolence or murky pride which then characterized the race, harboured a still more definite and vivid animosity against some rival party: each mind, while revolving around the one gloomy centre of national feeling, revolved also about the centre of its sect. Unhappy people, thus to exist and move in an element of hatred, at once diffusive and condensed![39]

Such were the pungent sentiments which prepared the Jewish people for the horrors of its catastrophe. Then there was added to these feelings a specific and extraordinary excitement, which gave intensity to every passion of a political or religious sort.—This was the fond, and now desperate, expectation, of the appearance of their Messiah.

The two principles, namely, the belief of a future life, with its rewards and punishments, and the hope of national deliverance and universal empire under the conduct of the promised Son of David, had kept pace the one with the other; and both had gradually become more and more distinct, had mingled more in the

[39] When he refers to the factions that distracted the Jewish people, Josephus employs the strongest terms which language affords—"One might justly say sedition grew upon sedition; or the state might be compared to a rabid beast that, in want of sustenance from without, rends and devours its own entrails." Τί τηλικοῦτον, exclaims the historian, ὦ τλημονεστάτη πόλις, πέπονθας ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων, οἵ σου τὰ ἐμφύλια μύσῃ περικαθαροῦντες εἰσῆλθον.

popular sentiments, and had settled into familiar forms of expression, so that what, in the remoter times was a mystery, or an esoteric doctrine—conserved by seers, and hidden under symbols, had now reached the populace, and was in every mouth. The hope of redemption under the Messiah, which existed in a warm and natural state at the time of the advent of Him who was indeed the Lord's Christ, underwent a pernicious revulsion from the disappointment that ensued when the Son of Mary was rejected. Pious desire turned then into a wild and frenzied wistfulness—the prey of every delusion. The articulate language of prophecy—the awakened expectations of mankind at large, and the portents of the times, all concurred to fix, beyond mistake, the then passing years as the destined era of deliverance.—Scripture and the comments upon it, marked almost the moment;—while the events of the age, the balancings of human affairs, declared the times to be fulfilled. Yet these years hastened on, and no Saviour—no Saviour from Gentile tyranny, appeared. In the interim the sacrilegious foreign power advanced every day nearer and nearer to the sanctuary of God. Unutterable profanations had been threatened, and even perpetrated;—but a little more, and the very heart of the Israelitish polity must receive a fatal wound. Yet the heavens were not rent—Jehovah and his Anointed stood afar from the

help of his inheritance.—Must it not be to try the constancy of Israel to the extremest point, and to enhance the arrogance of the oppressor to the highest degree; so that, on the one side, the coming deliverance should be the more welcome, and on the other, the vengeance so much the more signal? Doubtless God would, at the last, visit his chosen people. Suddenly, and in the blaze of his power, would he descend to his temple, unfurl on the heights of Zion the banner of his love and wrath; and thence advancing, followed by the tribes of Jacob, would go forth—King of kings, to trample on the necks of all mankind.[40]

Fond, and yet not—as it seemed, irrational hope! Proof could be advanced in support of every portion of this vast conception. No expectation comparable to this—none so great, so

[40] Josephus, from obvious motives of policy, draws a veil over the subject of the hope his countrymen entertained of a Prince and Deliverer who should rule the world. To have given its just prominence to this theme would have been highly dangerous both to himself and to his people. His allusion to it is brief and cautious, and is accompanied by a comment designed to exclude all suspicion. "But what chiefly incited the Jews to the war was *an ambiguous prediction* χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος, found in their sacred writings, the purport of which was, that, *about that time* some one of their country should rule the world. This prediction they appropriated to their own race; and many of their Rabbis were led astray by the interpretation. In truth the oracle pointed to Vespasian, who was declared Emperor in Judæa."—*De Bello Jud.* L. VI. c. 12. If this were indeed the "chief incentive" of the war, it doubtless held a much larger place in the sentiments and harangues of the people and their leaders than appears from the narrative of the historian.—Josephus knew more of this "ambiguous prophecy," and of its mighty influence over the national feelings, than he thought it prudent to avow.

bright, and at the same time so *distinct*, had ever been indulged by any people: no analogous instance stands upon the records of history: an ambition so dazzling was known only to the Jew. And this hope had been rendered the more vigorous by compression;—the weight of all visible probabilities weighed it down;—nothing less than the Power of Rome, with all her legions, bore upon the expectation of Israel—and yet did not crush it. Judæa against the world: no, rather God and his Messiah, against the potsherds of the earth!

Often must it have happened to the haughty Jew to gaze, in sinister contempt, upon the military pomp of the Empire (at Rome or in the provinces) and to meditate the hour when all this splendour should fade before the throne and car of the Messiah.—Yes, many a time had he brooded upon the thought that Rome and her pride should ere long lie in the dust at the gate of Jerusalem;—and suppliants from the capitol kiss the feet of the princes of Zion!

How then shall we measure the desperation or the rage when a hope so ancient and so vast was drawing to its crisis? At length a terrible surmise stole upon the dismayed heart of the people;—that the very foundations of their belief were illusory! The dark consummation which this wretched people, now hemmed in by an irresistible enemy, had to fear, was not the famine and thirst of a siege, or massacres within

their walls, or the carnage to be expected from the irritated legions;—it was not the overthrow of their city, the ruin of their temple, the devastation of their land, the extinction of the race;—a worse catastrophe was before them: nothing less than a plunge into the bottomless gulph of atheism:—it was the death of a nation's soul that was at hand. If indeed at the last the promise should fail, if the Gentile sword should be suffered to cut off root and branch of the people of Abraham, what then were the Scriptures—what Moses and the Prophets—what Sinai and its thunders—what the long series of signs and miracles which had conveyed to this people, and to this alone, a genuine faith in one God? By a false concatenation of inferences, the religious convictions of the Jewish people, the whole of their belief of things unseen, was made to hang upon the event of the siege of the holy city. Let but the abominable signals of the Roman legions be planted upon the walls of the temple, and then Israel, carrying with him all his hopes—the anticipated splendours of time, and the glories of eternity, must leap from the height into the shoreless abyss of despair!

Under the pressure of emotions so supernatural and extreme, if more could have been endured by man than was then suffered, or more effected than was performed, it had actually been sustained and done. The feeling of the people was far more profound than that it should

measure itself against any pains or dangers mortality can undergo. The visible and sensible woe of the siege did but faintly symbolize the convulsive anguish of every Jewish heart. It was as when a guilt-stricken wretch approaching his last hour, though torn by the pangs of death, forgets the wrench of bodily pain in the torment of the soul;—the writhing of the limbs, the contortions of the features, the livid hue, the glare of the eye, the sighs, the groans, are imperfect expressions only of the misery and terror of the spirit.

To attribute an absolute authenticity to the long and elaborate speeches which the Jewish historian puts into the mouth of the chiefs of the factions would be idle; and especially so where, according to his own account, all or most of those who were actually present on the occasion soon afterwards perished. Nevertheless there is a sense in which these harangues deserve attention; for Josephus, familiarly acquainted as he was with the sentiments of his countrymen, and with their style of thinking, no doubt adhered to dramatic truth in composing these orations, and would assign to the speakers language proper to the character of the persons. Although graced with not a few Grecian turns, the matter of these compositions is unquestionably national. Nay, it may be granted as probable that broken portions of an actual address, on some signal occasion, were reported, and had come to the

knowledge of the historian. By the same rule it is acknowledged that while the speeches of Roman Generals and Senators, as given by Livy, are Livy's speeches, they may still be regarded, although fictitious in a strict or historical sense, as authentic and characteristic examples of Roman feeling.

With this caution in view, it is a matter of some curiosity to examine the harangues of those of the Jewish leaders who survived the destruction of the city, and whose fate it was to receive in their persons the last strokes of Roman vengeance. Supposing it to float somewhere between truth and fiction—true in elements—fictitious in form, the address of Eleazar, chief of the Assassins, to his companions, when shut up in Masada,[41] and unable longer to hold out against the Romans, may be adduced as a highly characteristic exhibition of the ultimate, or fallen and melancholic stage of martial fanaticism. With the extinction of the specific hope whence it had sprung, the heat and vivacity of the feeling had passed away, leaving only its desperation:—the fury is gone, but not the folly. The once boisterous passion assumes even something of the serenity of good sense;

[41] A precipitous and strongly fortified height, overlooking the *northern* extremity of the Dead Sea. The Maccabees first, and afterwards Herod, had constructed on this hill-top what was deemed an impregnable fortress. As such it had been always held by the latter in a state of readiness to serve him as a place of refuge in the event of a rebellion.

but yet entirely wants the consistency of true wisdom. So terrible a commotion of the soul of a people could not instantly subside; and a while after the roaring of the storm is hushed, the billows continue to fling their huge masses sullenly upon the shore.

The secular hope of national deliverance and military glory was that which had inspired the constancy of the people up to the moment when they beheld their temple in flames; but then, of necessity, their ill-placed confidence dissolved.—It was that very temple which should have received the Messiah:—that building, as they firmly believed, no power in earth or heaven could overthrow; for it was destined to endure to the consummation of all things. But the temple was now actually levelled to the ground:—the people's hope disappeared also, and with it, as we cannot doubt, the religious faith of multitudes of those who perished in the carnage that followed.—In that last hour of anguish did not many a warm Pharisaic heart become suddenly cold with Sadducean despair?—Yet others there were whose feelings underwent a revulsion, and in whom, when the worldly seduction had lost its power, the better religious sentiment would regain its influence. So (if we may regard as in any sense genuine the last and fatal discourse of Eleazar) was it with that desperate leader.

"Such, brave comrades, such is our immemorial resolution, that to God alone—the true

and righteous Lord of men, homage is to be rendered; and that neither from the Romans, nor from any other earthly power, is servitude to be endured. The day is now come in which we are called upon to seal our profession by our deeds;—unless we be ourselves unworthy of that profession. And this is certain, that if the servitude we have in past times submitted to was grievous, what awaits us, should we fall alive into the hands of the Roman, will be aggravated by intolerable torments.—Were not we (the Sicarii) the first to revolt?—are we not also the last to resist? I hold it then to be a special grace of Heaven, to us accorded, that we possess as we do at this time, the means of dying honourably and free, while others of our nation, betrayed by their fallacious hopes, enjoyed no such option.

"No one can now doubt that to-morrow's sun must see this fortress in the hands of the enemy. But there remains to us the undisputed choice of a noble death; and a death in the arms of those most dear to us.—No, ardently as he desires to take us alive, he is as unable to deprive us of this choice, as we are to resist him in the field. Resist the Roman in the field! no, this we should long ago, and from the first of our revolt have understood, when peradventure it might have availed us to know it, that the Divine irrevocable decree has sealed our destruction as a people. The Jewish race, once so dear to God, He has consigned to perdition. Do we want proof of the

fact;—let us look to the site of the sacred city, at this moment smoking in its ruins, and strewed with the bodies of thousands of the people.

"And now, my companions, indulge not any such presumption as if we, who hitherto have escaped the common ruin, were not sharers in the common guilt; and might yet evade the universal sentence that is to annihilate the race. Look about you, and see how God himself has been stripping us of the vain hope we had clung to. What avails us the possession of this inaccessible fortress? what the abundance of provisions, and our ample stock of weapons?—God's out-stretched arm has rent from us our fond conceit of safety. Think you that the flames yesterday, which at first bore upon the enemy, did of their own accord suddenly turn round upon our newly-raised defences? No, this reverting fire was blown by Almighty wrath—the punishment of our presumption; and we find that the vengeance of God, provoked by our sins, is more inexorable than even the malice of the Romans.

"Already therefore doomed, as we are, by God—let us die:—die—our wives exempt from abuse—our children unknowing bondage; and then, these delivered by our hands, we shall have only to discharge, one for another, a generous office, and mutually ensure the death and sepulture of freemen? Our treasures we will consume.—How will the Roman vex to

be defrauded at once of our persons and of our wealth; both of which he thinks his prey! Yes, but we will leave him our stock of food—an evidence that we were not urged by famine, but that from the impulse of a steady purpose, we had preferred death to slavery."

Thus, says the historian, spoke Eleazar.[42] But many of his auditors quavered. Some indeed met the ardour of their chief with a kindred resolution, and would at once have given it effect. Others, held by the tenderness of nature, and gazing upon their wives and children, doomed thus to die, burst into tears, and refused assent to the fatal resolution. The leader beheld with anxiety their trepidation, fearing lest it might shake even the more courageous, and disappoint his design.—As if inspired with high thoughts, his eyes fixed, and in energetic tones, he again addressed the crowd, bringing before them the brightness of immortality.

"Was I deceived then in believing that the brave had rather die than live dishonoured? Comrades, do you fear to die even to escape evils

[42] The historian's method of expanding immensely his materials, is shewn by a comparison of the succinct speeches reported in the Book of Maccabees, with the elaborate orations that embellish his work. In the present instance a license of abridgment and compression is freely used, the result of which may perhaps be a nearer approach to historic truth. So long a discourse as that which Josephus attributes to Eleazar (occupying five folio pages) would certainly not have been uttered or listened to, under such circumstances.

worse than death? In an extremity like this ye should neither hesitate, nor want a prompter. But let me remind you of that which from childhood we have learned—which our fathers and the sacred writings teach, and which our ancestors have so often authenticated by their deeds—that it is life, rather than death, which should be thought of as calamitous.[43] Death, is it not the Liberator of souls? does it not dismiss them to the pure abodes where none of the ill chances of mortality can enter? So long as we are bound to this mortal frame, and liable to the evils it inherits, our life is but a death. Oh unworthy alliance of the divine essence with a fabric that must die! Organ of the soul's power and will, yet does the body weigh it down to earth, from which freed, it soars to its native region;—regains a blessed and unbounded liberty, and like God himself, evades the sight of mortals. Yes, unseen does it enter the body; and unseen depart—a pure and unmingled essence;—yet potent—the cause of life, and itself immortal. Witness the independence and activity of the soul in sleep, when discharged for awhile from

[43] If this speech be regarded as nothing more than the composition of Josephus, it will not the less serve to prove a fact, important in its bearings—That a distinct belief of immortality—a belief far more distinct than appears on the face of the canonical prophetic writings, had long been entertained among the Jews, and had constituted a main article of that body of tradition, which, rather than the Scriptures, governed the opinions, the sentiments, and the practices of the nation.

the warfare of flesh, it enjoys its proper delights, and taking the privilege of its affinity to God, freely pervades all places, and even penetrates futurity!

"With what reason then can we fear to die, who court the refreshment of sleep? Preposterous surely for those to grudge themselves perpetual freedom, who prefer liberty to any other of the goods of life! This readiness to put off mortality we, as Jews, ought especially to exhibit; or if indeed we must go to learn such a lesson from strangers, let us look to those Indian sages who loathingly live a while to fulfil the purposes of nature, and hasten to die that they may shake off the ills of animal existence. None hinder them in their purpose; none lament their exit; but rather account them happy, and commit to their hand epistles of love to their kindred in the skies. Gladly do they ascend the pyre where all the grossness of the body is to disappear. Shall we then—better taught as we are than they, be less prompt to urge our course to immortality? This were indeed a shame.

"But even if we had been taught to think the present life the chief good, and death the greatest evil, it would still be certain, that, placed as we are, we should manfully meet our fate; since, as well the will of God, as the necessity of the moment, commands us to die. Believe it, countrymen, that long ago heaven

sealed the fatal decree which none of the Jewish race can evade, and which consigns us—guilty as we have been, to utter extinction. Our nation has fallen, not by the power of Rome—not even by our errors in conducting the war;—no, a stronger hand has crushed us—we perish beneath the stroke of the Almighty!

"Time would fail me if I were to recount the many signal instances in which, contrary to all probability, and even against or beyond the intention of our enemies, we have fallen the victims of Divine vengeance.—Or when any of our race has escaped immediate carnage, who would not deplore their lot as far more grievous; who would not rather die than endure what such have suffered?—Some, torn of the lash; some, tormented with fire; some, half eaten of beasts, and rescued, to be thrown to them alive for a second repast! Or were they permitted to live? yes, but only to be made the sport of their adversaries. How do those now desire to die who are yet compelled to breathe!—

"—Alas! where now is that city of ours, the mother-city of Juda,[44] where—with her many circling ramparts—her lofty towers and castles;—where, filled as she was with the means of war, and crowded with myriads of valiant men, eager to defend her! What has become of the city which we fondly believed to be the abode of

[44] Philo, *Legat. ad Caium*, well calls Jerusalem, not the metropolis of one land, Judæa only, but of many.

God ?—Rased to the ground ! nothing now marks the spot where once stood Jerusalem;—nothing but the tents of her destroyer ! Ah, and you may find there, as relics of the Jewish people, some miserable ancients, seated in the dust;—or a few women, reserved to dishonour.

"Which of us then, even if he could do so unhurt, should endure to behold another sun ? Who is there so false to his country—who so imbecile—who so chary of life, that does not vex to have survived so long as this ? Would we had all died rather than have seen the Holy City rased by the axe of the enemy—and the Temple, with horrible impiety, upheaved from its foundations ! Our souls, indeed, have lately been fed by the generous hope of speedily avenging the fall of our city upon the foe.[45] But that hope now vanishes, and leaves us no option:—let us rush then upon an unsullied death. Let us have pity upon ourselves—upon our wives—upon our children, while yet we have the power to do so. Death indeed all must undergo;—but not injuries, bonds, insults;—or not unless our cowardice drives us to meet these greater evils. And what evils are they ?—Elate with confidence, we at first defied the Roman power:—once and again we have scorned the proffered terms of our exasperated enemy:—dare we think then of his rage if he

[45] ..... ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἀγεννὴς ἐλπὶς ἐβουκόλησεν:—a highly significant phrase.

take us living? Wretched shall the younger of us be whose strength lasts out longer torment! wretched the elders, who have no power to sustain the trial! One shall see his wife led away to suffer violence; another, with his arms bound, shall hear the cries of a son, vainly imploring a father's aid.—No, this shall not be:—now—now are our hands free; now are our swords our own:—let them then do for us the kindly office! Free from the thrall of our enemies, we die;—free with our wives and children we launch from life. Our law enjoins the deed;—our wives and our children implore this grace at our hands: God himself throws the necessity upon us. The Roman would fain prevent it, and is all alarm lest any of us should perish before he can scale our defences.—We hasten then to offer to him, instead of his desired revenge, amazement at the boldness of our death."

All started up as if seized with frenzy, or possessed with demons, to give instant effect to the advice of their chief.—Each man embraced his wife—his child, and in the midst of fond kisses—his arm unknowing what it did, gave the fatal plunge. Each thought a moment of the miseries from which that stroke redeemed his loved companion and progeny; and all, without exception, dared the horrid act. Pitiable fate of men to whom it seemed the least of evils thus to make a carnage of their women and babes! The husbands and fathers, feeling as

if every moment they now survived was an injury done to the dead, hurried on what was yet to be effected. Fire was put to whatever the fortress contained. Ten of the survivors, chosen by lot, fell upon their companions: every man, in dying embraced the bloody remains of his own.—One then chosen from the ten, slays the nine, and he, taking a last look around to ascertain that the work of death was complete, rushed on his sword.

There is yet a form of popular fury which ought here to find a place, although its peculiarity may seem to disconnect it with any other kind.—We mean the atheistic fanaticism when it affects a community, and impels it to assault every mode of worship with intent to exterminate religious profession. Of this dire infatuation modern times have given us an example—the first in the history of mankind;—may it be the last!

Atheism, when it spreads among a people in the form of an active and positive opinion—vauntingly professed and eagerly disseminated, is something very different from ordinary irreligion, or reckless and profligate impiety; and it will be found to display each well known characteristic of a virulent religious creed:—it is in truth nothing else than a *heresy;* and the proselyting Atheist, how much soever his pride may resent the imputation, is a mere zealot;—

yes, and a zealot surpassing others in blind malignancy. Is the bigot religionist dogmatical, acrimonious, impudent?—is he a demagogue, and a noisy predicator of monstrous paradoxes? Just such is the Atheist. And if the one readily seizes the occasion to act the persecutor, and to dip his hands in blood, so, as we have found, does the other.

An opinion that attaches only to scattered individuals, displays nothing more than a sample of its genuine properties: but let it affect large masses of a people, or take possession of a community, and then its real qualities come into play. Every age has produced a few petulant sophists, who would fain persuade themselves and the world that they had at length rid their natures of the very rudiments of belief, and that they held nothing to exist which could not be handled and seen, tasted or smelt. But an affectation so extreme does not readily overthrow the common sense of mankind at large; nor would it ever do so without the aid of peculiar and accidental incitements of a political kind. In fact all imaginable forms of monstrous error had been turned up in the chances of four thousand years before this of national Atheism—more monstrous than any, made its appearance. That the great body of an instructed people should yield itself a prey to the madness of Atheism, and should deliberately endeavour to rear the social structure upon the site whence

every vestige of worship and religious fear had been removed, was indeed a novelty that would not have been reckoned among things possible, or in any degree likely to take place.

Yet the French revolutionary frenzy actually reached this pitch; and it is well remembered what was the temper of this last prodigy of the human mind, when it burst the shell. Its parents had announced that it would be rational, just, and moderate, as the beautiful creature of Philosophy; but it instantly proved itself to be rabid and blood-thirsty like an offspring of the Furies? As the Atheism of the philosophers would not have spread over the land, unaided by political impulses, so neither would the political passions that attended the course of the revolution, alone have sustained, and for so long a time, that sanguinary exasperation which raged through France year after year: and in fact the massacres and the executions of the republican era were, in almost every instance, hurried on by an embittered hatred of whatever appertained to religion: — legends of blasphemy were inscribed on all the banners of blood. The civil war was a crusade against God; and those who at the commencement had professed it to be their ambition to blot out the name of Christ, were borne along by the impulse to which they had yielded, and could not stop until they had spent all their spite in the endeavour to dethrone the Most High.

We need only change the phrases current among the populace, and substitute one set of emblematic embellishments for another, and then the horrid scenes of the French revolutionary civil war are repetitions, on a larger scale, of those exterminating frenzies that so often have desolated the fair provinces of that country. A super-human spectator of terrene affairs—ignorant of the dialect, and of the circumstantials, would quite have failed to distinguish the blood-shed and devastations of one era from those of another; and far from suspecting that the truculent savages of the Revolution were the disciples of philosophers, might have deemed them only superstitious friars, and templars, of a new and more intolerant order.

The authors of this confusion discerned, just in time, the jeopardy into which they had led the country:—they hastily retraced their steps, and so mankind lost the benefit of the spectacle which must soon have been witnessed if the Intolerance of Impiety had been left to run its round. Leave was given to the Maker and Ruler of the Universe to resume his place in the fears—though not in the affections of the people; for it had been found that without the stay of religion the social machine could not safely perform its movements. The public heralds therefore proclaimed anew the Eternal; and leave was granted, to the credulous at least, to expect a future life, and to fear retribution.

The lesson perhaps may long serve the European nations, and no second attempt be made of a like kind. Yet what has once happened must no longer be spoken of as utterly beyond probability. This assuredly ought to be confessed, on the ground now of actual experiment, that if in any instance the ordinary or common and sensual impiety of the mass of mankind comes to be quickened by a stirring spirit of disbelief—if the irreligion which hitherto has been sluggish or frivolous, kindles into a petulant bigotry, and utters itself in acrid blasphemies; and especially, if the same atheistic zeal lurks in the bosoms of the upper classes, and ferments at the centre of government—then little will be wanted to put these forces in movement, or to direct them against the institutions and the parties that uphold the worship of God. A slight and accidental political excitement would be enough to bring on the crisis. Whenever—if ever—such a train of events shall in any country have room, it will be seen that, if Popery be a bad instigator of the malignant passions of a people, Atheism is a worse; and that the fanaticism of impiety should be dreaded even more than that of superstition.

The history of modern Europe, and of our own country especially, would have afforded many, and striking examples of that order of Fanaticism which brings the military and re-

ligious sentiments into combination. The instances are present to the recollection of every reader. And beside that a universal enumeration could subserve no important purpose, and would fill volumes, some of these cases are of that ambiguous and perplexing kind, which a writer may well desire to evade, rather than meet the dilemma of either giving a sanction to what it would be unsafe to approve; or of sternly condemning what we ought not to think ourselves competent to adjudge as altogether immoral. Moreover, other cases of this order involve the political and religious prejudices of existing parties; and are not to be spoken of without kindling the embers of faction. To call the originator of this or that body—a fanatic, would be, according to the interpretation of some, to become the champion of the opposite system of opinions. Or to brand with the same epithet the leaders on both sides, would be to wound (and still more deeply) the fond predilections of all. There are pages of our British history — English, Scottish, and Irish, which will need to be written anew, when our religious factions shall have come to their end.

SECTION VIII.

FANATICISM OF THE SYMBOL.

THE arduous part of our subject now meets us. In reviewing those phases of error which have long ago passed away, we occupy a vantage ground, and may at leisure measure the proportions of the distant object. But every circumstance of the inquiry is of another sort when it is the extant form of religion which comes to be examined, and when what we should calmly and impartially speak of, are practices, opinions, and modes of feeling, regarded as excellent, or leniently dealt with as venial, by our contemporaries—our friends—our coadjutors—ourselves.

It were an arrogance in any man to assume that he can exercise an absolutely impartial judgment concerning the things of his own age. No human mind has ever reached such serene elevation. If the characteristic and prevailing errors of the day have been discerned by here

and there an individual, himself has not escaped that depressing influence which attends a long-continued and anxious meditation of objects that show a frowning face to whoever refuses them his homage. Conscious then of a disadvantage not to be avoided, and careful to maintain that modesty which the knowledge of it should engender, we may yet advance, enheartened by the anticipation of an era, perhaps not very remote, when the Religion of the Scriptures, having at length passed through the cycle of its degradations, shall, without any more hinderance, bless the human family.

In contemplating the errors of past ages, no point more important presents itself, nothing which should so fix our attention as the fact that certain extravagant modes of feeling, or certain pernicious practices — the offspring of an active and virulent fanaticism, have, after a while, subsided into a fixed and tranquil form, such as has allowed them to win the approval and to secure the support of the calmest and most enlightened minds; and so to be transmitted through successive ages—accredited, unquestioned, admired. The turbulent stage of fanaticism would do the church little harm if it were not succeeded by a tame and moderate fanaticism — seemingly wise and temperate.— The parent in these instances is an ephemeron; but the progeny has had a longer term than that of the phœnix. — The rugged surface of our

globe, such as it is seen among the Alps or Andes, imposes awe, as if those stupendous piles of primeval rock, capped with the snows of thousands of winters, were the very symbols of protracted unchanging duration—or of eternity itself; and yet is it not true that the huge masses owe their stern grandeur and their lofty pride to terrible powers of commotion?—these mountains were upheaved when our world was in her fit of boisterous frenzy—when convulsions shook her centre. Instead then of regarding the now motionless forms as emblems of repose, we should deem them rather the relics and the portents too of confusion.

Nothing, or nothing favorable, should be inferred on the behalf of any system or constitution of things from its present tranquillity, or from the moderation and the wisdom that invest it; or from the accidental benefits which it may claim to have produced. The blackest superstitions have shewn an exterior mildly magnificent:—the extravagances of personal torture have worn the garb of seraphic piety:—the Fanaticism of intolerance has shone in combination with great qualities; and the zeal of military proselytism has made alliance with substantial virtues. There is nothing, then, to wonder at if even genuine piety and the brightest personal excellence are found to exist under a state of things which owes its origin to an impulse essentially fanatical. The question

is always, not whether accomplishments and virtues and piety exist within this or that system; but simply—whether the system itself be good or evil.

The Fanaticism of the Symbol—or a malign and turbulent zeal for the honour of a creed, supposes of course, the possession of a written and authoritative canon of faith. But then this Rule has to be interpreted; and the interpretation, in each instance, insensibly draws to itself those profound emotions which the sacred importance of the canon calls into play.

It does not appear that sectarian rancour, in any distinct form, had shewn itself before the time when the Jewish prophetic economy having been sealed, and the written Testimony of God consigned, in a defunct dialect, to INTERPRETERS, a field was opened to diversities of opinion, each of which challenged to itself entire, the prerogatives that attach of right to the original document. From the period when Exposition of Scripture became the business of a class of men, the Jewish community parted into sects which, in an exasperated condition, were the main causes of the ruin of the state, the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the race.

In this instance what we assume to have been *new* in the history of human nature, was not the existence or the breaking forth of diversities of opinion; for these have disturbed

all countries in all ages; nor was it the alliance of certain modes of thinking on abstract subjects with temporary and political interests; for nothing has been more common than such associations. But the novelty was precisely this—That the tremendous weight of God's sanction —truly believed to belong to the Canon of Faith, was claimed by each party in behalf of its special exposition of the rule. So fatal an assumption effected a firm coalescence of every religious sentiment with the passionate workings of self-love, pride, jealousy, and the sense of personal and corporate welfare.

Within the circle of these feelings every proper element of Fanaticism finds room, and no species of Fanaticism has been altogether so compact or so permanent. The other kinds (as we have seen) have had their hour and have vanished; this has settled down upon Religion—documentary religion, as well in Europe as in Asia, and now in America, and has become the inseparable condition of all forms of Worship.

We say every proper element of Fanaticism displays itself in the Fanaticism of the Symbol.—As for example:—The Divine Being, when so outraged as to be made the patron of a virulent faction, appears to the votary altogether under a malign aspect, and can no more be thought of such as He is. Again, the irritation excited by opposition in matters of opinion, when heightened by a vindictive forethought of future

judgment, brings with it the most peculiar species of misanthropy known to the human bosom; and an arrogance too, that far transcends other kinds of aristocratic pride. With an anathematizing Deity—an anathematized world, and himself safe in the heart of *the only Church*, the zealot wants nothing that can render him malign and insolent.

Mere diversities of opinion by no means necessarily involve virulent or acrimonious sentiments. Sad indeed would it be if Christian amity, and that true unison of hearts and hands which the church should exhibit, could not be hoped for until an absolute uniformity of notions and practices is brought about; for it is plain that so long as one mind possesses more native power and more accomplishments than another, there must be inequalities of knowledge, and varieties of apprehension. Nothing less than the imparting of omniscience to every human being could remedy the inconveniences that arise from this source. Nor in fact are such differences ever found to throw a cloud over private friendships, or to disturb the harmony of general society, while angry exaggerations and the swellings of wounded pride are avoided.

There can therefore be no need whatever that, as a resource against the evils of sectarian virulence, we should either throw ourselves into the arms of Church despotism, and renounce the liberty of reason; or give way to the

relaxation and the apathy which would render us altogether indifferent to truth and error. This indeed were miserably to degrade human nature, and to quash its noblest ambition. We subtract the premium from mental industry, we remove the crown from the goal on the course of knowledge, when we discourage the zeal with which vigorous minds pursue Truth. How should mankind ever emerge from barbarism, or how free themselves from the tyranny of superstition, if the first lesson we are to teach them is, that error has no noxious quality, and truth no prerogative?

To affirm or to insinuate that a just and accurate knowledge of Religion avails little to our welfare, is not only a rank absurdity, but must be regarded as a pernicious tampering with that fatal insensibility which, alas, envelopes human nature. Instead of teaching the indifferency of opinion, rather let every man's anxiety to obtain *for himself* the inestimable pearl of genuine knowledge be stimulated to the utmost; and then, not only will this jewel be individually secured, but the strange illusion will be broken up whence fanatical zeal takes its rise.—Strange illusion indeed, which impels a man who has bestowed little or no industry upon the business of seeking truth for himself, to use efforts so prodigious for forcing it upon others! An anomaly surely is this in the common law of self-love. But the temper and conduct of the zealot are made up of inconsistencies. It is, he says,

the well-being of his fellow men which incites his endeavours; and yet nothing in his style or mien bespeaks philanthropy. A disposition the very reverse of good-will one would assuredly assign to him. Besides;—while thus anxious to hear a faultless creed uttered by all lips, this champion of the faith walks up and down in a much corrupted world, scarcely heeding the many grievous degradations under which humanity is suffering. His eye can glare upon wretchedness and upon vice in their most melancholy forms — and forget what it sees. Nay, into the cup of human woe he can himself pour the bitterest ingredients; — he can afflict his fellow men with the whip, with the brand;—he can cast them into dungeons, and leave them there to die in the pestilent damps of his charity;—all this he can do, and still persuade himself that it is zeal for God and love to man which prompts his labours.

Thus absurd is the human mind when fairly surrendered to religious delusions. The power of the infatuation in these cases seems to result from a combination of the opposite feelings belonging to full persuasion and secret misgiving. The controvertist owes the heat of his zeal as well to firm conviction as to a mistrustful anxiety concerning the truth of his dogmas:—and the faith and the doubt are alternately attached to the authoritative document of his

belief, and to his special interpretation of it. It is this very oscillation of the mind which produces the turbulence of his emotions. If the imagination be liable to high excitement from a pressing sense of the reality and the impending nearness of the objects that engage it, this excitement may be furnished either by a vivid faith in the original CANON, or by confidence in the CREED that has been derived from it. Then — as fear and jealousy bring the irascible passions into play, these will not fail to take occasion from—the obscurity of the subject in dispute—from the cogency of an opponent's argument—from a conscious incompetency to deal with matters so difficult, and not least, from those qualms which follow a too highly stimulated exertion of the faculties.

In matters of belief, and especially when the powerful motives of religion take full possession of the mind, we involuntarily lean very much one upon another. This social instinct is perhaps stronger than is ordinarily supposed; and it is very likely to be lost sight of where the prevalence of angry passions appears to deny its existence. And yet it is in those very instances most intensely at work. Man proves himself to be constituted for society, as well by his hatreds as by his affections. Amid the dimness and the intricacy of the present scene, wherein Truth evades pursuit, and Error uses a thousand artifices to get herself courted, the perplexed spirit

fondly looks for a numerous companionship in the path it takes. Our belief, and the comfort of belief, mount with the tens, and hundreds, and thousands, that are seen to be joining us on the road:—we cannot believe alone; and our doubts too are in the power of others. To assail our convictions is not merely to wound our self-love, and to irritate our pride, but it is to withdraw something from the interior warmth and vigour of the soul. Without formally confessing it as a fact, that an antagonist has robbed us of our assurance—for the contrary would be affirmed, our feelings are the same as if we had been despoiled of that precious possession; and these feelings prompt us not merely to resent the injury, but to recover the property lost.

Putting out of view then certain accessory motives which will presently claim to be mentioned, the zealous champion and propagator of a Creed has an interest to promote that deeply engages his passions. Pride and secular advantages out of the question, it is a matter of sincere anxiety with him to secure, to maintain, and to extend the pale of his party. He looks aghast at the danger of being deserted, or of seeing a host on the opposite heights. No endeavours are too great therefore which may arrest defection while it is small and feeble. Under the pressure of this solicitude it is no wonder that the defender of a Creed should avail himself

of the extreme means of persuasion. Or if measures of violence are not at hand, he snatches up the weapons of spiritual hostility. And first, a strenuous endeavour is made so to identify the special interpretation with the Authoritative Canon of faith, as that whoever impugns the former shall stand declared—the enemy of God. Instead of for a moment admitting the reasonable and modest supposition that the Interpretation may perhaps contain more than the Canon will support, and that therefore caution should be used in doling out anathemas, every artifice of an elaborate sophistry is employed to keep such a supposition out of view. Nothing less than the peculiar exigency of the occasion could drive the zealot into so egregious a dogmatism; for he feels that if he were to give ground but an inch, he must forfeit his usurped right to fling the bolts of heaven. If the Interpretation be not indeed divine, it is merely human—a simple opinion; and if so, must be submitted to the common conditions of argument. The headlong champion would not go so far as he does, if he knew how to stop short, or if there were any middle ground. It may well be believed that, in many an instance, the acrimony and the blasphemous arrogance of sectarists have scandalized even themselves in their more sober moments.—But what could be done?—As well surrender the controversy and confess defeat, as relinquish the

right to curse in the name of God. This right laid down, and how meagre, how cold, how powerless a thing is the argument, reduced to its naked merits! The punishment affixed by the laws of the moral world to the first offence of entertaining malignant exaggerations, is the necessity it involves of running on to still worse excesses. Once madly insult reason and charity, and we are abandoned, perhaps for ever, by both.

The transition is rapid and almost involuntary from the first stage of fanatical intemperance to its last:—the ground in these regions is precipitous, and whoever leaps, leaps into an abyss. The facility with which a specific gratification may be procured is a main circumstance in giving impetuosity to sordid desires: for while it is difficulty that enhances the nobler passions, it is facility that enhances the baser. So, especially, does it happen with rancorous and vindictive emotions. Only allow them a ready means of reaching their consummation, and they rush on ungovernably. Now the peculiarity of the position which the religionist occupies offers always to his hand the most tremendous missiles revenge can covet. On the field of common life many obstacles happily stand in the way to prevent the completion of an angry resolve:—the dark purpose of the moment postponed, dies away, and is forgotten. But it is not so in the spiritual world. The revenge which the irritated zealot meditates is

ready—it is safe, and it is ample:—how then should it be foregone? He has only to mutter perdition—and the stab is given. A murky revenge analogous to this of the religionist has been common among barbarous and superstitious hordes.—The malign sorcerer—intimate of demons, thinking himself full fraught with venom borrowed from the infernal world, is well content to dart a look only at his enemy; sure that the mere glance of the evil eye of hatred would in due time take effect—that the florid cheek must fade—the strength decay, and the victim fall.

Yet Conscience claims her hour with all men, even the most debauched; and it must especially be so with those whose habits make them conversant with the divine rule of morality. Such, although every day indulging the darkest malignity, are continually reading that "whosoever hateth his brother is not of God." They may abstain from distinctly bringing the criterion home upon themselves; and yet are fain to have recourse to pleas that are intended to parry the condemnatory inference from the rule. The pretexts of zeal are many:—and if, as we have seen, tormentors, murderers, devastators of kingdoms, can quote chapter and verse in justification of their barbarities, those who only curse, but do not kill their opponents, may easily do the same.

Many, as is evident from the peculiar character

of their devotional sentiments, have taken a somewhat more circuitous, but a still more effectual method for lulling conscience, and for turning aside from themselves the rules of charity. This method has been (alas the inconsistencies of human nature!) so to cherish the fervours of piety, and so to straiten the pattern of their external behaviour, as should seem to remove all suspicion of the genuineness and elevation of their personal religion. By amassing to a prodigious height the evidences of sanctity, a commensurate licence has been obtained for the indulgence of hideous passions. A man who every day ascends the mount of ecstasy, and holds intimate converse with heaven, surely should not be called in question, when he comes down to earth, on account of an inexorable or vindictive temper! Examples of this very sort are abundant (and some have already been referred to) on the pages of Romish pietism; and we may find on the calendar men whose breath was pestilence, whose every word was a fiery bolt, persuading themselves and their admirers that they enjoyed celestial favours, such as Gabriel and Michael might envy! To assume that the accident of a protestant creed quite excludes any parallel enormity, were indeed to be blind. What we are now speaking of is—human nature, and the mysteries of its delusions;—not the question of transubstantiation, or of the pope's pretensions.

Among those who make themselves conspicuous as the chiefs and leaders of the fanaticism of dogmas and creeds, many marked distinctions, arising from natural temper, might be pointed out; but it must suffice here to mention the two orders of character that stand foremost. These are—The Despotic and the Ambitious.

There have been Bajazets and Zingis Khans on the field where the quill is the only weapon that is wielded. But how difficult is it to analyse satisfactorily the emotions that constitute the lust of power where nothing that is secular or tangible — nothing that is intelligibly advantageous—nothing that makes a man richer or better, is to spring from the attainment of his purpose! While the earlier and immature stages of a dominant passion retain many alliances with other motives, and are found to be mixed up with various ingredients, so as to afford several points of connexion, whence they may easily be traced to their sources, and brought to view;—it is the characteristic of the *last stage* of such passions that, having let go every such alliance, they become inexplicable, and defy scrutiny:—a simple element admits of no analysis. The passion that has at length made itself exclusive master of the breast, closes the avenues, and enjoys its solitude. Thus it is with avarice. So long as any one purpose for which money avails is kept in view, we may conceive of the miser's avidity; but after every ordinary

desire has been excluded and renounced, the love of hoarding can be described only as an insanity, to which it is vain to apply the principles of reason. When the wretch, shutting out the pleasures of life, its pride, and its hopes, clasps his shapeless bags as a sovereign good—we lose hold of him—the last link of human sympathy is snapt, and he seems to go adrift from his species.

A similar mystery belongs to the lust of power in those cases where it prevails exclusively of the hope of secular or palpable benefits accruing to the individual. The passion which leads a man to subjugate kingdoms is intelligible; but how shall we explain the feeling that makes a man pant to bring the realms of mind under bondage, and when it is not himself that is to enjoy the homage of the vanquished world? Now it is a curious fact, that the individuals who have exhibited in the extremest degree this species of insatiable arrogance have themselves occupied a subaltern position in the hierarchy or polity to which they rendered their services; and have not shewn any very active personal ambition, as if the attainment of visible supremacy had been their ultimate motive.

Minds in an eminent degree fervent and energetic never occupy the common ground of vulgar interests:—their native region is a higher one—or a lower; and although they may seem to be busy, and perhaps are so,

with the ordinary concerns that fall under their management, these palpable elements are but so many ciphers of a more important intellectual process that is going on :—the matters handled are dice, by means of which a great game is played. Such spirits, conversing with the ideal rather than with the actual world, see every thing in symbol. The revolutions and advancements, the perils or the increase of a hierarchy, mean, to such, more than can be given account of in common modes of computation. While the poet descries on the face of nature the types of a world of unsullied beauty, and while the metaphysician gathers from the things around him nothing but abstract truth, there is a class of men whose conceptions of ideal perfection turn upon order—government, and the unison of wills.—Add to this peculiar intellectual taste a haughty asperity of temper, and bring the individual to his position within some vast edifice of despotism; and he will exhibit the singular passion we are speaking of.—Or shall we adduce an actual instance, and name the learned, irascible, dogmatic Jerom? All his great merits duly admitted;[1] and in truth Jerom stands

[1] The power of miracles was not reckoned among this saint's endowments, and it is singular that few men of superior understanding made any boast of the sort. Erasmus balances the disparagement ingeniously :—Quod si cui nihil absque miraculorum portentis placere potest, is legat Hieronymianos libros, in quibus tot penè miracula sunt, quod sententiæ. No attention is due to a spurious Life of Jerom, in which miraculous powers are largely claimed for him.

unrivalled in his age, both for accomplishments, and force of intellect, it can yet be no injustice thus to point him out as a proper specimen of that theological despotic temper, which, irrespectively of personal advantages or aggrandizement, impels a man to refuse to others the liberty of thought and utterance, and which would, if it were possible, impose eternal silence upon the world of mind—so that all should bow, not indeed to himself, but to the authentic standard of belief which he admires and defends.

With the fairest opportunities again and again presented to him of ascending to whatever position he might please of ecclesiastical greatness, and of grasping the fattest things of the Church, this extraordinary man broke away from the world, and from the pontifical court, and freely, and without affectation, took up his abode in a narrow cell at Bethlehem.[2] If at length a little sphere of personal influence gathered about him, it was by no efforts of his own that he thus came to be courted as chief of a community.[3] Jerom was, in the most complete

[2] Jerom's accomplished biographer (above quoted) will not allow the stupid monks of his own age to suppose that this illustrious man—monk as he is called—led a life in any sense like their own—cæremoniis obstrictam. And he subjoins an animated description of the ancient monastic institute—its liberty, its elevation, its purity. Such, we grant, it might be when a Basil or Jerom presided; but assuredly not so when the feeble and the fanatical were left to themselves. Let Palladius bear witness.

[3] Though ordained Presbyter, and nominally charged, as Sulpitius

sense—an intellectualist:—it cost him nothing to tread the pomps of the world under foot. Few perhaps have relished with a keener taste the delights of a literary course. Upon the books and parchments that crammed his cloister he gazed, pen in hand, with fond and greedy satisfaction;—the king of Babylon looking down from his gardens upon the gilded roofs of palaces, all his own, might have thought himself less happy.[4]

Yet Jerom wanted, not only the serenity of the Christian temper, which may render a man happy in seclusion, though conscious of powers that might enable him to shine in the first ranks of life; but even that philosophic placidity which belongs to the genuine lover of physical or abstruse science. He was the Theologue—and the word is designation enough. So long as there might be heard, from any quarter of the

testifies (*Dialog.* 1) with the care of the Church at Bethlehem; he held office under the stipulation that he should not be burdened with the pastoral duties. His only external care seems to have been that of the consciences of the ladies who put their spiritual interests under his direction. Of the mode in which he acquitted himself of this duty the Epistles to Marcella, Eustochium, Paula, &c. give evidence. It should be added that not the slightest suspicion attaches to Jerom in these instances. Those who would indulge railleries on the occasion prove that they judge of the characters of men by the rule of their own vulgar knowledge of human nature.

[4] A great part of his patrimony Jerom expended in the collection of a library, which his writings prove to have included the principal literature of the age. These, purchased at Rome and in Egypt, he carried with him when the second time he abandoned public life and retired to Bethlehem.

wide world, a dissentient whisper—a breath of opposition to the authentic decisions of the Church, no rest could be enjoyed, and no mercy could be shewn: the gainsayer must be crushed. "Never have I spared the heretic," is the boast of this doctor, "but have always reckoned and treated the enemies of the Church as my own."[5]

None could dispute Jerom's merit in this instance.[6] Was there any where displayed a disposition to call in question, even in the most modest style, the immaculate creed or the faultless usages of the Church? Jerom started up from his pallet, and with the iron rod of his merciless eloquence pursued the offender from side to side of the empire;—from Egypt to Britain;—from Syria to Spain;—from Numidia to Gaul.[7] It is edifying to follow this defender of a perfect Church on those peculiar occasions in which the whole forces of his mind are employed—

[5] Procem. adversus Pelagianos.

[6] Erasmus in one place seems to deny Jerom's acerbity of temper, and appeals to certain mild expostulatory epistles addressed to his friends. But the proof of a man's disposition is to be gathered from his behaviour toward his enemies. Yet the same writer on another occasion says, speaking of his controversial and apologetical pieces—In utroque vehemens et acer Hieronymus, ut nonnullis parum memor Christianæ modestiæ videri possit. But, says he, it is not to be wondered at that a man of so pure and holy a life should show some impatience toward gainsayers!

[7] He protests however that it was Error, not Men, that he hated. Aut certè, si in errore voluerint permanere, non nostram culpam esse, qui scripsimus, sed eorum, &c. His opponents attributed the warmth of his zeal to envy—Ego solus sum, qui cunctorum gloria mordear: et tam miser, ut his quoque invideam, qui non merentur invidiam!

not to sustain some one of the capital principles of faith—nor some article of discipline apparently good and sanatory; but a confessed and egregious abuse;—an abuse against which moderate and reasonable men had already raised their voices;—an abuse to which public opinion was then actually administering a partial remedy;—an abuse moreover, which presently afterwards the very chiefs of the Church themselves found they could no longer uphold, and were compelled to denounce. It appears that scandalous irregularities had long attended the nocturnal services, or vigils with which certain festivals were honoured.—Yes; but the usage was "a venerable" one;—it had been authenticated:—The Church—the Church approved it:—popes pronounced it good; but, more than all, a bold and contumacious dissident had come forward to impugn it. The night vigils therefore, with all their debaucheries, were to be valiantly maintained, and maintained too by the most inexorable ascetic of the age! Amazing solecism! this doctor, who would himself cheerfully have burned rather than sanction the marriage of a priest, is now heard pouring execrations upon an opponent whose extent of crime was to assert on the one hand the lawfulness of clerical matrimony, and to deny on the other the expediency of promiscuous nocturnal assemblages in Churches![8]

[8] The candle-light processions and nocturnal services which formed part of the ceremonial of the Church, were, like very many of its

Athanasius, with a magnanimity that has extorted praise even from Gibbon, suffering, preaching, and writing in defence of a doctrine that constituted the very foundation of the Christian system, is well entitled to indulgence if at any time the heat or the anxieties of a momentous controversy lead him into intemperance of language. But what indulgence can be due to the despotic Jerom, whose arrogance bursts all bounds on an occasion in which a wise man would either have silently listened to rebuke, or have candidly and openly admitted the propriety and seasonableness of his opponent's objection?

An important lesson might be gathered from a review of the circumstances of each of the controversies in which this learned writer engaged; but we must at least pause a moment upon the one carried on against first, Jovinian, and then Vigilantius.[9]

If any such exchange were practicable, we

pomps and superstitions, adaptations only of idolatrous practices which it was found more easy to transmute than to abrogate. The Paschal vigils were the Thesmophoria, under a change of names. Who shall say whether decency has been most violated by the worshippers of Ceres, or the observers of candlemass? The derivation of the nocturnal illuminations from Egypt to the Grecian worship, and the adoption of the custom by the Church, is traced at length by Ciampinus, *Vetera Monimenta*, Pars I. p. 190. Eusebius tells us that splendid illuminations were employed by Constantine as a means of bringing over the populace of Byzantium to Christianity.

[9] Jerom does not abstain from the pun which the name of his opponent so naturally suggests.—"*Vigilantius?* no, call him rather *Dormitiantius.*"

might well consent to throw into the gulf of oblivion one of the most voluminous of the Fathers—even Jerom himself, as the price of recovering an authentic statement of the opinions and arguments of these two early dissidents, of whom in fact we can now learn nothing more trustworthy than what a good catholic of Spain or Ireland may know of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin by the favour of his priest. That they were men of unblemished faith and piety, as well as of vigorous understanding, cannot be absolutely ascertained, nor are even their specific opinions to be clearly determined. Contumelious exaggeration swells every sentence of the passages in which their opponents depict them.[10] It may however be inferred pretty clearly that the one, as well as the other, inveighed against each of the principal superstitions of the times;—especially against the vow of virginity, and the merits of monkery—the mediation of saints—the worship of relics, and the usage of promiscuous vigils. It seems also that the absolving power assumed by the clergy, and the secular usurpations of the hierarchy were called in question by them. No valid suspicion attaches to the proper orthodoxy of these men;[11] but it is plain

[10] Ais Vigilantius *os fœtidum* rursus aperire, et *putorem spurcissimum* contra sanctorum martyrum proferre reliquias.

[11] Jerom, in his Catalogue of Church Writers, assigns Vigilantius a place among heretics, *only* on the ground of his opposition to the points above mentioned: had his orthodoxy been assailable, there is no doubt we should have heard of his delinquency.

that the assault they made, though directed against single points only, or adjuncts of the faith and practice of the Church, involved inseparably the fate of the entire edifice of Religion—religion such as doctors and monks had made it. Every thing must have fallen to the ground—the polity, the creeds, the power of Rome, the monasteries:—not a stone could have been left upon another, if Jovinian and Vigilantius had succeeded in awakening the *people* of Christendom from their trance, and had brought emperors and secular men of rank to listen to them favourably. Had these Reformers led back the minds of men to the Scriptures, and to the simplicity of faith and the soundness of morality—the horrors of more than a thousand years of superstition might have been saved.

Alas! another destiny awaited the nations. The Church had reached, at the close of the fourth century, the edge of a steep; but it yet stood upon ground whence a return was practicable. Learning and intelligence were widely diffused; and of the aliment of knowledge there was no dearth: a seal had not yet been set upon the volume of Scripture. The separate existence and independence of the Eastern and Western—the Greek and the Latin Churches, secured, or might have secured, an asylum to liberty. Indications too may be discerned of the fact, that, although high personages and dignitaries and eloquent writers, held together,

and understood their common interest, there were individuals — perhaps multitudes, who were far from assenting to the superstitions of the age, and who, with the Scriptures in their hands, dared to doubt, though hardly to speak or act.[12]

The regeneration of the Church was in that age hypothetically possible, and actually attempted; yet it utterly failed. The men whose intelligence and expansion of mind should have taught them to listen to reproof, and who should have entertained—if it had been but for a moment, the suspicion that the course of things might be unsafe — these, with a headlong intemperance, rushed upon the objectors, and triumphed. Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerom, the three illustrious leaders of the age, joined their giant strength, and gave to the Church the plunge which sent it down to the abyss. Whatever of degrading superstition, whatever of sanguinary fanaticism, whatever folly, whatever corruption, whatever cruelty, belonged to the

[12] The frequency and the seriousness of Augustine's references to the heresy of Jovinian prove that it had spread to an alarming extent; the same may be gathered from the anxiety of Jerom. The former, *De Bono Conjugali*, and *Retract.* b. ii. c. 22, says—Joviniani hæresis sacrarum virginum meritum æquando pudicitiæ conjugali tantum valuit in urbe Roma, ut nonnullas etiam sanctimoniales, de quarum pudicitia suspicio nulla præcesserat, dejecisse in nuptias diceretur.... Although repressed by the Church, the monstrous doctrine continued, it is added, to be whispered and insinuated during several years. Jovinian himself was exiled to the island of Boa—a rock on the Illyrian coast, where he died:—such was the tolerance of the fourth century!

religious condition of Europe under the sway of Hildebrand, may be assigned (as a true consequence) to the part taken and the course pursued by the great men we have named:—the fate of mankind through a long night of ignorance and malign tyranny was sealed when Ambrose, Augustin, and Jerom, combined to crush dissent.

Shall we apportion the blame among the three? If it were attempted to do so, a distinction, often requisite, must be made between personal criminality, and the actual ill consequence of a fatal course of conduct; for while it is Jerom who must bear almost alone the blame of indulging a despotic and malignant temper, it was the opposite qualities of Augustine—his mildness and his piety, that gave to his influence a permanent efficacy. Mankind would have sickened at the arrogance of the one, if the other had not stood by his side. The bishop of Milan perhaps should take station between the two.[13]

[13] Jerom had much more to do with these dissidents than either Ambrose or Augustine. The bishop of Milan, in an epistle to pope Syricius, reporting the result of a council of seven or eight bishops, held there for the condemnation of certain heretics, assures his holiness of their perfect concurrence with the papal court:—Jovinianum, &c. &c. quos Sanctitas Tua damnavit, scias apud nos quoque, secundum judicium tuum, esse damnatos. All were no better than Manichees, whose impious doctrine — clementissimus exsecratus est imperator (Theodosius)—and whose sectators had been expelled from Milan.

The allusions made by Augustine to Jovinian are in a somewhat better style; and it appears from them that his opinion was formed upon hearsay. See *De Pec. Merit. et remis.* b. iii. c. 7, and *De Nupt.* b. ii. c. 5; where we learn that Jovinian had first dared to call

Fanaticism, as we assume, combines always malign and imaginative sentiments, and in some instances the former, in others the latter, predominate. Thus, in the case of the despotic champion of existing establishments, the darker ingredient prevails over the brighter, or quite excludes it. But with the ambitious propagator of novel dogmas, or the factious chief of a sect, the imaginative element is ordinarily paramount; and it is not until after the temper has been impaired by exposure to irritation that the irascible and vindictive passions take the lead in the character. The religious demagogue is at first an Enthusiast only, and rises to fanaticism upon the winds of strife. Moreover the natural progression of his sentiments involves another unfavourable turn; for the public course he pursues, and the emergencies which, as head of a party, he encounters, present many occasions wherein neither his enthusiasm nor his fanaticism—neither poetry nor tragedy, will bear him clear of the perplexing embarrassments that surround him.—He has recourse therefore to guile; and from that fatal moment every sentiment assumes a new relative

Ambrose — Manichee — the common epithet then of theological contempt, and flung from side to side like *Methodist* or *Calvinist*. Taking Augustine's own account of the matter, as stated a little further on, in the same treatise, it must be granted that Jovinian had some reason on his side when he charged the Church with favouring Manichæism by her idolatry of virginity. To the same purport see *Contra duas epist. Pelag.* b. i. c. 1. *Contra Julian.* b. i. c. 2.

position, or itself undergoes transformation. It is as when a single drop of some potent essence is suffused in a chemical compound; what just before was colourless, or of a brilliant hue, is now, and in a moment, turgid; the splendour of the rainbow is gone; an earthy feculence clouds the liquor;—heat too is evolved, and noxious fumes rise from the surface.

The despot remains nearly the same from the commencement to the close of his career; for pride and hatred are steady qualities, and arrogance is stagnant. But the demagogue, or factious leader, passes through three stages of character at least; and when he comes to the goal is often hardly to be recognized as the being who started. The Despot too, is very nearly the same personage under every diversity of ecclesiastical system. But the sectarist or schismatic receives a specific character from the circumstances that surround him, and from the qualities of the body from which he breaks off. This accidental influence may be either for the worse or the better; and in truth when the body is in an extreme degree corrupt, and the objection insisted upon by the separatist is in the main reasonable, we cannot be justified on the ground merely of some extravagance or vehemence of conduct, to designate the Objector as a Fanatic. A man who takes up a righteous cause may speak or act fanatically, and yet well deserve our respect and gratitude. He alone should be

called fanatic, whose course of conduct was at first prompted by impetuous passions; and who throughout it, shrinks from the calm ordeal of reason.

Protestantism has been reproached on account of its fruitfulness in factions: the same reproach unquestionably attaches, and in an equal degree, to the ancient Church, and especially in the era of its highest secular prosperity. But the Church of Rome boasts of her unity; and she may be allowed to do so. Not now to mention the terrible means she has employed to quash rising schism, we should bear in mind that main principle of her polity which has left a wide field open always to spiritual enterprise and ambition. Protestant Churches have failed to calculate upon certain unalterable tendencies of human nature, and have made no provision for giving vent to exuberant zeal. The very same minds which, during the first four centuries, or among ourselves, would have headed a faction, and given their name to a hostile and separate communion, have, under the fostering care of the Papacy, lent their extravagance to the Church itself, and have proved its most efficient supporters.

Either as Founder of a new order, or as Regenerator of an old one, energetic and ungovernable spirits saw before them at all times an open field. It is true that a curbing hand was held by the popes upon this species of ambition;

yet the restraint was not more than enough to enhance, by difficulty, the passion for enterprise. The young and frenzied devotee, after astounding the monasteries of his native province by unheard-of severities—by portentous whims—by wastings, whippings, visions, ecstasies; and after imposing upon his superiors an unfeigned terror by turbulences of behaviour—always thoroughly catholic, and therefore so much the more difficult to be dealt with, obtained their ready leave (with flaming credentials in his hand) to beg his way bare-foot from Spain, France, or Germany, to Rome.—At the foot of the Sovereign Pontiff he threw himself in the dust—prostrate, body and soul:—there he wept and raved his season:—already he had vowed himself the "dauntless Chevalier of the Virgin," and only waited permission to fight her battles, and those of the Church, under sanction of its Head. During the weeks or months of suspense, his austerities and his pretensions roused a hundred jealousies among the comers and goers of the papal court: feuds and seditions made a perpetual din under the windows of the Vatican; and it seemed as if all the demons had flocked together to thwart if possible the holy purpose of the new adventurer, from whose hand they expected many a terrible buffet. At length the Holy See, having proved the constancy of the candidate; or shall we rather say, having ascertained that his frenzy was of the sort which, though it might be

managed, could not be repressed, and glad to rid itself of the importunity, granted the desired sanction, and signed the Brief.[14]

The Founder or the Reformer, now big with a licence that would reach all extents of absurdity, paced his way back—patrician mendicant! to his native mountains. Monasteries spring up about him in each cleft of the rocks:—his rule attracts every moon-stricken brain of the province; and in a year or two he moves about, the admired patron of insanity—far and near. Such, in substance, has been the history of scores of adventurers who, had it been their ill

[14] The career of Ignatius Loyola combines, in the most complete manner, all the proper elements of ambitious sectarian fanaticism; and a well written life of this illustrious founder might subserve other purposes than that of exhibiting the folly, knavery, and superstition, that are encouraged by the papacy. We much need—protestants as we are, to have plated before us, and for our instruction, those vivid instances of delusion and extravagance which the annals of the Romish Church so abundantly furnish. Whoever has closely and calmly watched the growth and maturity of fanatical illusion in the case of certain noted individuals that still figure on the stage of ghostly ambition, must have become convinced that nothing but accidents and names — costume and phrase, often distinguishes canonized from uncanonized heroes. Might it be hoped that the parties themselves, or at least their well-read chiefs, would look into the glass of history, and catching there their own resemblances, draw an inference of incalculable importance! Would any one who retains a particle of good sense or sober Christian feeling wish to find that his public course has been, in its essential motives, and in very many of its circumstances, the counterpart of that of men whose names are signalized as the spiritual fathers of innumerable cruelties, impostures, and corruptions? Let Gonzales and Ribadeneira be read and digested by any who, while panting for the notoriety of miracle, are forgetting truth, honour, reason, faith, virtue.

luck to be born on protestant ground, could have done nothing more illustrious, than give an ignoble name to an ignoble sect—have troubled their own age by angry divisions, and have conferred upon three centuries after them, the burden of some hard-to-be-uttered epithet of faction.

Deprived of its monkish apparatus (considered only as a means of drawing off restless ambition) the Romish hierarchy could not have stood its ground so long. Only let us follow up to its consequences the supposition that it had had, age after age, *to contend* with the dauntless spirits that originated or restored the several orders—with St. Dominic, and St. Francis; with St. Bernard, with Loyola, and with De Rancé; in that case it had long ago been rent and scattered to the winds.

So far as considerations of this sort should be allowed to influence spiritual affairs, the question would deserve to be entertained, Whether a permanent and readily available provision should not be made within the arms of a protestant church for giving a range to those extraordinary dispositions and talents which in all times make their appearance, and which, if not preoccupied, do not fail grievously to trouble the community that neglects them.

Fanaticism, we have said, has first an active or turbulent, and then a settled and moderated

form; for that which begins with inflammatory symptoms, subsides into a chronic derangement. In its earlier state it attaches chiefly to minds of inferior quality; but in its latter it insidiously invades the most generous, vigorous, and accomplished; and from these it draws a thousand recommendations that ensure to it credit and perpetuity. So was it (as we have seen) with the frenzy of asceticism, which, after raging among the vulgar — the Anthonys and the Symeons of Egypt and Syria, became epidemic in the high places of the Church, and overpowered the sense and piety of Basil, Gregory, Chrysostom, Jerom. So again the fanatic cruelty of intolerance, at first entertained only by the basest natures, crept at length upon the noble; and a Ximenes is seen to take up the tools of a Torquemada. And so with the fanaticism of religious war;—where Peter the Hermit and Walter the Pennyless led the way, Godfrey and Louis follow, with Bernard as their guide.

The very same kind of progression has had place, and even with worse consequences, in the history of the Fanaticism of dogmas and creeds. The authors and prime agitators of controversy—the men whose plebeian names descend as an obloquy to after ages, have (with a few exceptions) possessed but a poor title to celebrity; and, apart from the turbulence of their tempers, or their insatiable ambition, could never have attracted the attention of mankind. But the

agitation so engendered spreads; and at length none can well avoid ranging themselves on this side or on that of the question: great talents and solid virtues are drawn into the vortex; and so it happens that, while the ostensible mischiefs of strife—the rancour and the violence of the feud are moderated, its essential evils are deepened, and rendered permanent.—A christian country, or a community, is in this manner cast into a factious condition, and in that state abides age after age. But factious religionism, how much soever it may have been tamed and curbed, will not fail to be encircled by wide spread impiety, and infidelity, as the direct effects of the scandal of division.—Factions, moreover, benumb the expansive powers of Christianity, and prevent its spread.—They create too a universal confusion, entanglement, and perversion of religious notions. No inquiry can be calmly prosecuted, no results of solitary meditation can be safely reported, nothing can be looked at in its native form, so long as the jealousies and the interests of eight or ten ancient and corporate factions spread themselves over the field of theology. Even those few insulated articles of Christian belief or speculation, or of abstruse science, which have not been claimed by party zeal, are often found to alarm the wakeful fears of this or that guardian of sectarism, merely because the method of argument which may have been employed in such instances is fore-

seen to have a bearing upon matters that are to be held inviolable.—The opinion in itself may be innocent enough; but the logic that sustains it is dangerous. — Better then quash at once the suspicious novelty, which, though it may be good and true, is not momentous, than favour it, and so open the door to no one can say what innovations!

So poor, so timid, so feeble, so inert, so grovelling, so infatuated, is the human mind! Truth, which alone can be permanently advantageous, and which alone can reward labour or compensate losses, is looked at and listened to with eagle-eyed alarm; nor is entertained until she has protested, ten times over, that she means to rob us of nothing we dote upon.

Less than two hundred years ago—even so late as the close of the seventeenth century, this very same sectarian infatuation, this fanaticism of the creed and symbol, enthralled the physical and abstruse sciences, throughout Europe. No process of nature, no mechanic law, could be investigated or discussed apart from the interference of the fierce jealousies of rival schools.—A chemical mixture could not change from blue to red, from transparent to opaque—an apple could not fall to the ground, nay, the planets might not swing through their orbits, without kindling angry feuds in colleges. Not only was the method of obtaining knowledge utterly misunderstood; but it was not

believed, or not felt, that Knowledge is always the friend of man, and his coadjutor; Error his enemy. This degraded condition of the human mind was at last remedied by nothing but the bringing to bear upon the METAPHYSIC-PHYSICS of Des Cartes and Aristotle, a method of reasoning so absolutely conclusive that resistance was found to be useless. Prejudice and antiquated jealousy did not freely yield themselves up and dissolve:—they were undermined, they fell in, and were seen no more.

This deliverance of Philosophy—a very recent deliverance, though effected within a particular precinct of inquiry only, rapidly extended itself over the entire field of the sciences. Whether or not immediate success attended the pursuit of knowledge, every thing was scouted but its attainment. The scientific community blushed at the fond folly of ranging itself under rival leaders;—it coalesced as one body or phalanx, advancing under one banner.

Can it be conceived of as a thing even possible that pure reason should have had sway in philosophy so long as the interests of sects were to be cared for? Those two powers, Truth and Party, were not in fact contemporary scarcely a year; or contemporary only as Night and Day are so, through the hasty moments of twilight. Indeed the mere existence of factions in any department of opinion, is a conclusive proof that the method of inquiry, in that department, has

not yet been found; or at least is not generally understood.

Causes which need hardly be specified, have hitherto excluded from the precincts of Theology the reform that has spread through every department of natural science.—The dogmatic fanaticism which raged at the time of the Reformation, passed down uncorrected upon the political and ecclesiastical constitutions of the northern nations of Europe, and especially upon those of England, and it now firmly grasps the religious commonwealth. The violence of religious strife has indeed long died away; or it breaks out only for a moment; but no relief has yet been administered to the settled ill consequences of that delirium. So far as we are religious at all, the English people is a nation of sects, and our theology is necessarily the theology of faction.—Not a false theology—thank God; but a theology that is confused, entangled, imperfect, gloomy;—a theology which, while it abundantly breeds infidelity among the educated classes, fails to spread through the body of the population, and but dimly, or only as a flickering candle, illumines the world.

The recent consolidation of religious liberty, while it may fairly be hailed as an auspicious event, and likely to bring about at length the disappearance of faction, is utterly misunderstood by those who regard it as equivalent to the emancipation of Christianity. Far from being

the same thing, this overthrow of ecclesiastical despotism has, in its immediate effects, as was natural, highly inflamed the sectarian sentiment, or has given it a new birth. The exultation of the triumphant party, and the discontent of the defeated party, have, in different modes, infused an energy into the virulence of both, which seems not unlikely to prolong the existence of our absurd divisions, perhaps a fifty years.

A happier destiny may sooner break upon us! But whether it does or not, it is certain that an unobtrusive power has been some while at work beneath the entire ground of our sectarian edifices — a power which must (unless arrested) inevitably in the end, bring them down to the abyss.—The philosophy of the schools sunk to rise no more when the true method of science gained its first indisputable triumph. But although the same method is not formally applicable to theology, yet the *principle* of it is so, and is actually in its incipient stage of application—or perhaps has gone a step beyond that stage.[15] The art of

[15] Many more talk of the Baconian method than seem to be masters of it; or than have probably ever read ten pages of the Novum Organon. The assertion may be hazarded that, even in the walks of physical science, multitudes of those who are pretty well versed in the actual products of the modern philosophy, have not a conception of the *principle* of investigation as set on foot by Bacon. This ignorance is still more prevalent on the side of Intellectual, Ethical, and Theological Science. To speak only of the latter, it is deemed a thoroughly Baconian process to adduce, in series, all the texts that bear upon a certain article of faith, and at the end to sum up the evidence.—This is called Induction. But now if we look a little closely to the method and principle of interpretation, as applied

criticism, and the true logic of Interpretation, must restore to the church (under that guidance which is never denied when ingenuously sought) the pure meaning of Scripture.—The charm that cements petty communions will then dissolve; the excellence of Truth will be felt, and the fanaticism of dogmas will die away, when all men learn to hold in contempt every thing in religion but the ascertained sense of God's Revelation. Diversities of opinion must indeed remain so long as there are differences of intellectual and moral power; but these will engender no heat, and will produce no divisions, when all minds shall be moving on toward one and the same centre.

It would not have been anticipated as possible, that among those who reverenced the Scriptures, a superstition such as that of the papacy should at all have had existence. But history, in too

to each passage, we shall find that the prime maxim of the dogmatic and scholastic divinity, which demands that every thing should be judged of according to THE ANALOGY OF FAITH, and nothing admitted which cannot be reconciled thereto, or which may by inference give countenance to a known heresy, rules throughout. This surely is not to *learn* from prophets and apostles, but to *teach* them; and it is precisely the method which swayed so long the dark realms of pseudo-philosophy. In theology we have the *forms* of the inductive method often where there is little or nothing of its substance. A good work would it be to deduce from the Novum Organon those capital and universal principles which are indeed applicable to Intellectual and Sacred Science. Etiam dubitavit quispiam potiùs quàm objiciet, utrùm nos de naturali tantùm Philosophiâ, an etiam de Scientiis reliquis, Logicis, Ethicis, Politicis, secundum viam nostram perficiendis loquamur. AT NOS CERTE, DE UNIVERSIS HÆC, QUÆ DICTA SUNT, INTELLIGIMUS.

many instances, and in this, contradicts reasonable calculations, and shews that the perversity of man may thwart every beneficent provision of heaven. In like manner it might have been thought that the internal constitution of the Inspired Volume, as well as its express precepts, would have precluded the factions that have rent the Church in every age. It has not been so; nevertheless this internal constitution well deserves our attention.—It is only while we distinctly regard it that we can see in a proper light the folly of those disorders which fill out the volume of Church history.

Let it then be assumed that two main purposes were to be secured in giving a written rule of faith to mankind, namely, first, an infallible conveyance of that PRINCIPAL SENSE of Revelation which is essential to genuine piety; and secondly, such a conveyance of the ADJUNCTIVE or secondary portions of religious truth as should render despotic determinations on the one side, and scrupulous schisms on the other, manifestly unreasonable. We have to see in what manner both these ends are provided for by the actual constitution of the canon of Scripture.

It is saying little to affirm that no composition, whether historical or didactic (if the language in which it is written be understood) fails to convey to readers of ordinary intelligence the Principal Intention of the writer, unless indeed he himself be wanting in sense, or designedly

conceals his meaning under ambiguous or enigmatic terms. This is plainly implied when it is granted that language is a good and sufficient means of communication between mind and mind. To affirm any thing less were to stultify humanity, and to break up and derange the entire machinery of the social system. All men might as well become anchorets at once, if indeed language is found to be a fallacious medium of intellectual exchange.

And what is true of oral communication, is true also (with a very small deduction) of written communication. Moreover what may be affirmed concerning the written conveyance of thoughts among contemporaries, becomes liable only to an inconsiderable discount, when we have to do with the writings of past ages. This discount is much reduced if the composition in question forms part of a vast collection of contemporary literature. As it is certain that men must be fools or knaves when permanent misunderstandings arise among them in regard to the *main intention* of their personal communications; so is it certain that the principal scope of a book, ancient or modern, is always to be known where both writer and reader are ingenuous.

Nothing less then than an extreme perversity of judgment, such as renders the powers of language nugatory; can, in any case, give rise to an entire misunderstanding of an author's principal sense. Admit only these

ordinary conditions—that the writer was honest and of sound mind—that he was master of the language he employs, and that he made it his serious business to convey to his reader in the best way he could, certain capital articles of information—historical or moral, and then it follows, without an exceptive case, that his meaning on those prime articles is readily attainable by whoever himself owns common sense and a competent acquaintance with the writer's language. To take apart, for example, any one of the canonical writers, it is absolutely certain that the leading facts or dogmas which he means to teach, stand upon the surface of his composition. Has disagreement arisen in regard to these main facts or dogmas ?—nothing less than the egregious wilfulness of the human mind can have caused it.

On the ground of the admitted principles of language and of historic evidence, any one of the Gospels, with the Acts, and any one of the larger epistles, would amply and indubitably have handed down to us the SUBSTANCE of apostolic Christianity. If it be not so—a thousand tomes cannot do it.—If it be not so, we might stand by with indifference and see another Amrou throwing his brand upon a pyre that should contain every existing relic of antiquity.

But the Divine indulgence has far exceeded necessary bounds in affording to mankind the

materials of sacred knowledge. No parsimony is to be complained of on the part of the Instructor: nothing is wanted but ingenuousness in the scholar. The great articles of belief and duty have come to us through the instrumentality of nearly forty writers, to each of whom was allowed his entire and undisturbed *mental individuality*—his personal temper and taste, his own style, both of sentiment and of language, together with whatever speciality, either of sentiment or of language, he might draw from the influence of time and country. Each writer, while the track of his thoughts is steered by an unseen hand, moves on in a spontaneous course. Can any provision be added to this arrangement which should promise to exclude the possibility of a failure in transmitting the elements of religious knowledge? Let it be imagined that, out of the forty, two or three, or even seven, were obscure, abrupt, elliptical, mystic:—yet all will not be so:—for one whose style is emblematic or difficult, there will (on common principles of probability) be five that are natural and perspicuous.

But we have asked for another security against failure in the conveyance of the main points of religion; and we find it in the fact that this congeries of witnesses has been drawn, not from one century, but from the course of fifteen. Whatever diversity time can impart is by this means included.—So broad is the base

of that pyramid which was to stand through all ages, pointing man to the skies! Are we then to be told that what prophets and apostles believed, and what they taught to their contemporaries, and what they intended to transmit to posterity, comes down to us under an impenetrable obscurity? No miracle would be so hard of belief as this.

It need not be added that the correlative security of ancient versions and interpretations, in endless abundance and variety, surrounds these documents of our faith, and every way precludes the chances of capital error in relation to the Principal Sense of the whole.

There is an infirmity of the mind which impels us, on many occasions, to overlook or distrust those special circumstances whereon our welfare really depends, while we anxiously search for provisions of safety that either are utterly unattainable, or that would be pernicious if possessed. How often have feeble minds (and perhaps some strong minds) wished that a perpetual miraculous interposition had been accorded, such as should have exempted the Inspired Writings from the accidents and ordinary conditions that attend other compositions, and that affect ancient literature in the course of its transmission from age to age. Given at first by supernatural means—why has it not been accompanied and preserved by miracle through the periods of its descent to our times?

Need we reply—because it is from these very disparagements (if such they should be deemed) that are to be gathered the best evidences of the genuineness of the document itself. And it might be added—because the accidental difficulties or obscurities that belong to the Scriptures in common with all other literary remains of antiquity, have a direct tendency (if we will but admit it) to disturb and put to shame the senseless superstition—the doting upon particles, and worshipping of iotas, which makes duty and faith to hang upon this or that etymology or syllable.[16]

Of all impracticable miracles (if the solecism may be pardoned) the most impracticable and inconceivable would be that which should exempt a mass of ancient writings from those accidents whence ambiguity or difficulty of interpretation, in single instances, arises. Any such interposition, to have been effectual, must not only have extended through the original

[16] It is perhaps quite unnecessary to point out the conspicuous distinction between an overweening zeal for this or that interpretation of single passages or phrases—and the laudable endeavour of the critic to ascertain, first, the *real text* of an inspired writer; and then, the actual sense in which his words were understood by the persons to whom they were addressed. We have affirmed above, that the Scriptures, like all other rational compositions, will not fail to convey their principal sense to every ingenuous mind, *if the language in which they were written is really and fully known to the reader*. Now the important labours of the Biblical critic are directed to this very purpose of putting the modern reader (so far as is possible) into the position of the ancient reader. Dogmatic interpretation should not—cannot reasonably commence, until the language, with all its essential proprieties, is brought under our familiar cognizance. If there be any

document, imparting to each sentence, phrase, and word, an insulated perfection, and imbuing each verse with a sort of phosphorescence; but must have pervaded all times and places, guiding the hand of every drowsy copyist, and inspiring every translator. Nor would even this have been enough; for the miracle, to have subserved any practical purpose, must have reached as well to the reader of Scripture, as to the writers and transcribers:—all minds must have enjoyed the very same measure of native power—must have possessed the same preparatory knowledge, the same simplicity of purpose, the same temper, industry, and power of retention.—First the book a perpetual miracle; and then every reader a prophet! The simpler method surely would have been for a voice to have sounded incessantly from the sky, repeating every hour the monotony of Truth!

The Divine machinery is of another sort; and

usage of words, any principle of construction, any special sense of terms, the knowledge of which is important to an exact grammatical rendering of the sacred text, the utmost diligence should be employed in fixing beyond doubt the rule, with its exceptions. When erudition has done its utmost on such occasions, it has done nothing more than bring our modern mind into contact with the mind of the writer. Thus, for example, the inestimable labours of Bishop Middleton, and others, have just served to annul the disadvantage of receiving the testimony of the apostles on the most important doctrine of the New Testament, through the medium of a dead language. The critic, in such a case, and so far as his labours extend, resuscitates the Greek of the apostolic age; and gives us the benefit of listening to the living voice of Paul, Peter, and John. Preposterous then, as well as illiberal, is the objection of those who endeavour to evade the force of irresistible evidence by saying that the doctrine of the article is a trivial matter.

our gratitude, informed by reason, should follow the steps of that wisdom which adapts common instruments as well to extraordinary as to ordinary occasions; and so adapts them, as to include various ends in one and the same system of means.

Do we possess the rational satisfaction of perusing the history of our Lord's ministry in the words of four writers? Yes, but this important advantage is taxed with the inconvenience (if such it be) of presenting frequent diversities of circumstance, order, and phraseology. Now can we really wish that the evangelic records had been so exempted from the operation of ordinary causes as would have been requisite for excluding every diversity? Are we willing that these, the most important of all historical compositions, should forfeit the *special characteristics* that mark them as original and genuine writings, for the sake of our being saved the infirm disquietudes of a superstitious temper? Those who will, with a blind and perilous pertinacity, rest their belief upon a verbal exactitude, meet a proper rebuke when they find that evangelists and apostles, with the freedom that is natural to truth and honesty, are negligent of matters that in no way affect the vast affairs committed to their trust.—If critics are sometimes frivolous, the Apostles were no triflers.

Who—or who that understands and respects the laws of testimony, does not gladly turn from

secondary evidence, though more methodical and perspicuous, to original evidence, even though charged, as it almost always is when genuine, with incompleteness in the details, with apparent inconsistencies, and with a hundred unexplained allusions? The compiler of history is an INTERPRETER of the story: not so the contemporary and original narrator of facts, who seldom or never turns aside from the vivid objects that fill his mind, to provide for the ignorance, or to prevent the cavils of posterity. Unless we be slaves of superstition, we shall then hail with pleasure those very imperfections (imperfections they are not) which mark the canonical books—historical, didactic, and epistolatory, as unquestionably genuine. Thankfully shall we embrace those obscurities which are the seal of Truth. Deprived of its difficulties, every well informed mind would be staggered in admitting the Bible to be what it professes.

And yet from this distinctive glory of the documents of our religion are drawn, by the superstition and the overweening dogmatism of zealots, endless occasions of strife. That abrupt form which belongs to original evidence, is a rock whereon wranglers of every age have split. Some usage—some circumstance or ceremonial, infinitely trivial, but which a compiler of history might probably have supplied or explained, is left open to conjecture in the apostolic record.

Alas the lamentable omission! Why did the inspired writers grudge us the single decisive particle which must have excluded doubt? So does the zealot repine in secret over the sacred page. But in public he loudly denies any such deficiency of evidence in reference to the disputed point. — Among his followers, and in presence of the simple, he becomes hoarse in protesting the demonstrable certainty of his assumptions. — Language, he assures us, has no means left for making plainer than it is, what was the apostolic usage in this matter!

A signal advantage it is that the Scriptures (of the New Testament especially) have traversed the wide and perilous waters of Time, not on one keel only, but a thousand. No ancient text has been so abundantly secured from important corruption as the text of the New Testament: in the present state of critical science, who entertains a doubt of its substantial integrity? But the consequence, the inevitable consequence of this multifarious transmission of copies has been the origination of innumerable verbal variations. Here again the superstition which dotes upon jots and tittles, is broken in upon. Heaven has treated us as MEN; and it supposes that we shall prefer what is truly valuable to what is trivial. We receive a most important confirmation of our faith; but are denied the fond and idle satisfaction of

possessing a Text for every particle of which, and for the position of every syllable and letter, Divine authority might be challenged. Are we still disquieted and discontented? It is manifest then that our estimate of what is desirable differs widely from that of the Author of Revelation. He has bestowed upon us the better and the greater advantage; we fretfully demand the less.

Entertainment (and instruction too) might be drawn from an exhibition of certain instances in which, if we had actually possessed fewer means of information than we do, we might have pronounced decisively upon points that are made questionable by the additional evidence.—If one apostle only had spoken, we should have been free to dogmatize stoutly; but two have glanced at the matter; and we are plunged into doubt! Sometimes, as we have seen, the sacred writers say too little; and anon too much! The very copiousness of our means of knowledge deducts in such cases from our certainty; that is to say, it disturbs the presumption of ignorance, and baffles the arrogance of bigotry. Are there those—one might almost believe it from their temper, who so love darkness rather than light, that they would willingly surrender the three testimonies, or the five, which bear upon a controversy, so that they might, with unrebuked fervour, assume and assert their factious opinion?

While it is certain that the Scriptures will, like all other rational compositions, convey their principal purport to every ingenuous mind, it is not less certain that these books, in common with other remains of ancient literature, must present thousands and tens of thousands of questionable points, critical, historical, or dogmatic. On this ground industry and erudition find their field; and what labour can be more noble or worthy than that of endeavouring to fix or to elucidate the sense of writings in which (beside their unparalleled merits as human compositions) are imbedded the inexhaustible treasures of heavenly wisdom! How honourably are our modern Christian Rabbis employed in bringing to light, from day to day, some hitherto neglected particle of the "true riches;" and how thankfully should we — the unlearned, receive these products of the diligence of our Teachers! One might properly notice here the beneficent provision made for perpetually supplying new matter of instruction to the Biblical teacher, so that the zest and expectation of the taught need never become languid. Sacred Science, in all its departments, having been diffused miscellaneously through the substance of a volume so large as the Bible—and an ancient volume too, the time will perhaps never come (certainly it has not yet come) in which it might be said that the sense of every portion has been determined.—All would

be well if the simple principle could be remembered—That although the perfection of knowledge in matters of religion is an object of the most worthy ambition to every Christian for himself, something immensely less than the perfection of religious knowledge is all we are entitled to demand from others as the condition of holding with them Christian fellowship.

The vexatious question of Terms of Communion presents one of those instances—and there are many such, in which, while formidable difficulties attach to the THEORY of the affair, none whatever, or none that are serious, are found (unless created) to belong to the PRACTICAL OPERATION. Science often stands embarrassed, where Art moves on at ease. Science is indeed the proper mistress of Art; nevertheless she should have discretion enough to be willing to receive lessons of homely dexterity from her menial. Men of speculation are always splitting upon the reefs in these shallows. Presuming that the *Abstract* is always purer, and of more avail than the *Concrete*, they reform—not for the better, but the worse; and, impatient of ideal faults, plunge themselves and others into real and fatal perplexities. How often does the unthinking artisan employ simple expedients which the philosopher could never have taught him; and actually carries his work triumphantly through theoretic impossibilities. And how often,

in the business of government, does common sense, with ancient usage as its guardian, prove itself a vastly better mistress of affairs, than abstruse calculation.

A Consistory of Divines might spend a century in digesting, first a profession of faith, and then a code of morals and a rule of discipline, such as should stand as a universal law of Church communion. In the mean time a Christian society fraught with the vital principle of piety, and faithful to itself, and to its trust, far from awaiting impatiently the result of the conference, might rather hail demur after demur, and fervently hope that the sittings of this Sanhedrim of Christendom might be protracted to the consummation of all things. Nothing that is truly important need be foregone until the creed and code should be brought to perfection;—nothing that we need sigh for would be conferred upon us by the boon when at length it should be granted.

The question — How may the Church be preserved from desecration?—if propounded in cases where nothing exists that is indeed holy—nothing but the rites and semblances of Christianity, is one which may well be reserved for an idle day. And no such question need be discussed at all where the religion of the New Testament—its faith and its morality, actually subsist.

The distinction between Christians and others is obvious—or obvious enough for the practical

purposes of ecclesiastical government, if looked at in the concrete, and under the daylight of common sense; but it quite eludes research if submitted to analysis. The *living* are never much at a loss in recognizing the *living;* and no artificial process will avail to enable the dead to exercise any such discriminative office. Is it demanded to frame a creed and a rule by the due application of which secular men—frivolous and perfunctory, shall be able to keep charge of the fold of Christ, and to open and shut the doors of the Church? Absurd problem! Idle endeavour! The CHURCH wants no such rule, and needs no such guardianship; and a better employment may easily be found than that of setting a watch and putting a seal at the mouth of a SEPULCHRE!

The duty of those, whether they be the few or the many, to whose hands are entrusted ecclesiastical powers, is not that of a Rhadamanthus. Responsibility does not stretch beyond natural powers, and it is quite certain that men have no power to search each other's bosoms; nor should they think themselves charged with any such endeavour. The pretender and the hypocrite belong always to the Divine Jurisdiction; the Church will be asked to give no account of them so long as they successfully conceal the fatal fact of their insincerity. The exceptive case of the hypocrite therefore excluded, not a shadow of difficulty—of *practical* difficulty, attends

the discharge of Church guardianship. Let but a community, whether more or less extended in its sphere, be pure in manners—PURE, not *sanctimonious;* let the Scriptures be universally and devoutly read by its private members, and honestly expounded by its teachers; and in this case it will be very little annoyed by the intrusion either of heretical or licentious candidates. A Church of this order offers nothing which such persons are ambitious to possess:—they will stand aloof. Tests will be superseded; and the rod of discipline brought out only on the rarest occasions.

It is the heat of controversy between sect and sect, that ordinarily generates the malevolence which (according to our definition) is essential to Fanaticism, and which distinguishes it from Enthusiasm. Yet there are cases where, without this extrinsic excitement, modes of opinion such as must be deemed extravagant, have assumed a gloomy and irritated aspect. Instances of this sort have of late abounded, and some reference to them seems proper.

A singular revolution has marked the progress of religious sentiment among us within the last few years; and it is this, that while the tendency to admit enthusiastic or fanatical sentiments belonged, till of late, almost exclusively to the lower and uneducated classes, it has recently deserted the quarters of poverty and ignorance,

and taken hold of those who are clothed in purple, and frequent palaces. The Fanaticism of Want, and the Fanaticism of Plenty, though identical in substance, naturally differ much in form. The characteristics of each are worthy of notice.

We know and think far too little of the feelings that are working in the bosoms of the abject and wretched poor: if we knew and thought more on this subject we should look with dread and wonder at the placid surface which, in common, the social mass exhibits. The personal endurance of famine, cold, and discomfort, from day to day, and the worse anguish of seeing these evils endured by children, breeds a feeling which, did it but get vent, would heave the firmest political edifices from their foundations:—but the writhings of tortured hearts are repressed, diverted, and only on rare occasions burst forth in tumultuous acts. With many, indeed, all sentiment and moral consciousness gives way under the pressure of woe; or is dissipated by debauchery:—the soul sinks even below the level of the wretchedness of the body: hope, the spring of life, long ago took her flight, and is totally forgotten; every ember of joy and virtue is quenched.

But with some of the Pariah class (numerous in every community) enough of the remembrance of hope survives to impart sensitiveness to despair.

The poor man, though he feels every day that he has given ground a little in his combat with Want, and must renew the strife to-morrow with wasted strength, and from a worse position, and although, when he throws himself on his pallet, he knows that the Misery that haunts his hut does not sleep while he sleeps, but will be busy, from the evening till the morning, in sapping the broken fabric of his comfort;—although he knows and feels this, yet the faint conception of a happier lot still haunts him, and he asks—Might not I also be blessed? If he does not distinctly expect a reverse of his doom, he still meditates the abstract possibility of an amended condition.—He is like the shipwrecked mariner who takes his seat day after day on the highest point of his rocky prison, and from sun-rise to sun-set, peruses the horizon, not certain but what a sail may appear, and may make toward the islet of his despair. Such things (let us believe it) are felt and borne by myriads near us, even while we are gaily gliding from scene to scene of gain or festivity!

It is upon elements like these that political agitations work; and our amazement should be, not that once and again in the course of years tumult and outrage break forth; but rather that the public peace is so seldom violated; and that when disturbed, any bounds are set to the vindictive passions of the million who have so long suffered in silence.

Experience has abundantly proved, even to the conviction of irreligious statesmen, that the influence of religious motives upon the lowest rank — taken at large, is decisively favourable to public order, and is the most powerful prop of civil government. None now call this capital political truth in question, but those— the few, whose enormous usurpations are of a kind that can be secured only by imposing brutalizing degradations upon the helot class.— None now deny this first axiom of political science — that religion is the bond of peace; none deny it, we say, but the Planter and his Patron.

The cases are very rare in which a just and patriotic government (or even a despotic one) might not calculate its security by the rule of the amount of religion among the labouring population of the country. There have been momentary exceptions; but they are quite intelligible, and when properly understood confirm the rule which makes it the interest and duty, as well of the legislative as of the administrative powers, to maintain, and to extend, and to invigorate, by all proper means, the Public Religion.

The Fanaticism of poverty, which only under very unusual provocations takes a political turn, or threatens civil institutions, somewhat more frequently offers itself to view within its proper circle of religious sentiment. The Gospel is the chartered patrimony of the poor; and to

affirm that the motives of religion, as they bear upon the cares, privations, and contempt of a low condition, ordinarily pass into a malign state, would be the same thing as to deny the divine origin of this Gospel. The contrary is most decisively the fact. The partial evil has existence only when the theology that is promulgated among the people is of a murky and arrogant kind;—when one set of ideas singly, and those the least benign, is presented to the mind of the people; and when, either by abstruse dogmas, or by rigid and repulsive usages—by the monotonous assertion of mysterious exclusive privilege, and by a stern, scrupulous, and sanctimonious discipline — a discipline more careful of faith than of morals—it is only by such means, that the melancholy impatience belonging to social degradation and distress, gives a dark colour to the poor man's piety.

Those will be at no loss in verifying or in rebutting our present allegation, who have been personally conversant with the religious sentiments of the lower classes in certain departments of our ecclesiastical commonwealth. To such might be recommended an inquiry of this sort, namely — How far those forms of doctrine among us which tend to favour malign spiritual arrogance, and which confessedly are of ambiguous moral tendency, and how far certain strait and abhorrent rules of communion, and how far an excessive leaning to the demo-

cratic principle in the management of Church affairs — a leaning wholly incompatible with pastoral independence, how far these evils—*if they any where exist,* savour of what may be termed plebeian Fanaticism.

But the favourites of Fortune, as well as her outcasts, have sometimes their Fanaticism: there is a sleek and well-bred religious delirium, as well as one that is rude and squalid.—

—Christianity rarely affects the opulent and the noble, except during disastrous epochs; or in those gloomy hours of a nation's history, when all things earthly are in jeopardy. It would seem as if nothing less than the most vehement agitations could be enough to dispel the illusions that beset luxury and honour. Be this as it may, the coincidence of causes deserves to be taken account of which, in such seasons of fear and tumult, affords to the Christian of elevated rank a necessary counterpoise for his religious emotions, and tends to impart soberness to his piety. This indispensable counterpoise is furnished to Christians of lower station by the cares and labours of vulgar life. But the perils and vicissitudes of a revolutionary era bring home to the patrician orders a sense of the precariousness of earthly good such as, during the tranquil flow of events, they are hardly ever conscious of. At these times a difficult part is to be performed, and dangerous measures often are to be attempted, which fully

engage every energy of the soul. It is then that public persons are thrown upon their principles, are compelled to look to the ultimate reasons of their conduct; and are in fact taught certain severe lessons of virtue, such as are never dreamed of in the summer seasons of the world's affairs. It is at such times that religious sentiments, if they exist at all in the bosoms of the great, are brought into act, and are, by that means, preserved from exaggeration.

This general order of things being kept in view, we may the more readily understand the somewhat singular appearance which serious piety has assumed of late in a portion of the upper classes of England. The time we have lived through has indeed been a season of momentous change, and has furnished excitements of the most unusual kind. And yet, to the people of the British Islands, the throes of the world and the sanguinary convulsions of the nations, have offered a SPECTACLE, rather than an arena of action and trial. During a full forty years, the English have stood crowding their cliffs in mute astonishment, and have gazed upon the distant prospect of blazing palaces, or demolished thrones—of embattled fields, or of cities deluged by civil feud;—they have caught the muttering thunders of war and revolution; but still have been able to turn the eye homeward, and have seen the smiling serenity of order and plenty spread over all their

land. We have indeed entertained momentary alarms, and have groaned under burdens; but have hardly been called to meet the brunt of danger :—the stress of affairs has not lain upon us, so as to engage the higher virtues.

The excitements of an era of commotion have been felt;—yet apart from its proper correctives. The spread of religious feeling among the rich and noble may fairly be attributed (in measure) to the salutary impression which the magnitude and portentous aspect of events has made upon all minds. Yet it has been an *impression* without a *conflict*—an awe; but not an exercise. There has been no arduous part to perform, no sacrifice to make, no privation to be endured. All this while the religious noble have reclined upon a couch as soft as that of the irreligious noble;—the silken banner of their ease has floated in a summer's sky:—they have fared as daintily, and have been served as sumptuously, as if their portion were all in this world:—they have undulated from theatre to theatre of pious entertainment, and have met acclamations and smiles;—yet nothing has compelled them to act or to suffer like men.

There can be little room then for surprise if the result of this peculiar conjunction of influences has been to give play to exorbitances of opinion, and absurdities of conduct, among those of the rich and noble who have admitted religious impressions. Some, we cannot doubt, the

ferment of whose piety has brought our Christianity into contempt, would have honoured their profession of it by exhibiting the courage and devotion of confessors, had public events been of a kind to lead them into any such arduous sphere of action: these persons have been fain to yearn for miracles in easy times, that offer no crowns of martyrdom.

Religious sentiments in a highly excited state, and not counterpoised by the vulgar cares and sorrows of humble life—not taught common sense by common occasions, is little likely to stop short at mere enthusiasm:—the fervour almost of necessity becomes fanatical. The progress of the feelings in such cases is not difficult to be divined.—That sensitiveness to public opinion, and that nice regard to personal reputation, and that keen consciousness of ridicule, which belong to the upper classes, and upon which their morality is chiefly founded, tend, in the instance of the pious oligarch, to generate vivid resentments when he feels that, having over-stepped the boundaries of good sense and sobriety, he has drawn upon himself the public laugh. The intolerable glance of scorn from his peers, to which he has found himself exposed, must be—not retorted indeed—not avenged; but yet returned in some manner compatible with religious ideas. It is at this very point of commuted revenge that fanaticism takes its rise. Interpretations the most excessive, expectations

the most dire, comminations the most terrible, and a line of conduct arrogantly absurd, set wounded patrician pride again upon its due elevation—repair the damage it has sustained; and surround it with a hedge of thorns.

If (national prejudice apart) it may be said that the English character possesses a peculiar nobleness; and if it be true that the English aristocracy stands foremost as by emphasis the aristocracy of Europe; and if moreover it may be believed that Christianity has a stronger hold of the English than of any other people, may not a time reasonably be looked for, when the special excellences of the national character, illustrated by rank and high culture, shall admit (without taint of fanaticism) the elevating influence of unfeigned piety, and so shall exhibit to the world, under the very fairest and the brightest forms, the true magnanimity of virtue!

To what extent the advance of Christianity among the nations has been obstructed by the absurd or the hostile form into which it has been thrown by its professors, none can presume to determine. None knows how many perplexed and hesitating minds, distracted with doubts, have received their final and fatal shock from the spectacle of folly, pride, and strife which the Church has exhibited.—None can calculate what might have been achieved by the zeal and energy that have been consumed in

dissensions, or quashed by despotism. Much less can any mortal dare to surmise how far the outraged clemency of heaven has, by these same means, been averted altogether from the theatre of human affairs, so that blessings have been withheld—the efficacious influence denied, and the world abandoned through long ages, to its melancholy course of superstition and of crime!

The dependency of cause upon cause in the vast and occult machinery of the moral system, lies far beyond the reach of human curiosity. That day must be waited for which is to reveal the springs of the movements that now meet the eye, and perplex our meditations. But might not a time come when those who readily confess themselves to sustain, as Christians, a responsibility toward the world at large, and who are even forward in claiming their several shares of this responsibility—when such, pausing a moment on their course of zealous enterprise, shall, with an ingenuous dread of meeting at last the Divine reproof instead of approval, set themselves to inquire whether the Christianity they are sending from land to land is not loaded with some fatal disparagement, such as forbids its wide extension?

But it is asked—Who is competent, or who commands the means of regenerating our ecclesiastical existence? Where rests a blame, of which no man has the power to rid himself? The answer to such an inquiry is not

difficult; for the individual culpability which rests upon Christians, living under a corrupted or perverted state of things, is that of resisting the appeals of common sense.—The personal guilt is that of harbouring fond predilections, and of jealously quashing any course of inquiry that is foreseen as likely to bring sectarian interests into jeopardy. The personal blame is of the very same kind that attaches to the maintenance of other species of vicious infatuation. If the actual amount of this criminality be small in the instance of the untaught and the unthinking multitude, it reaches a height we will not estimate, with the few whose duty it is to care for, and lead the many. Thus it has been in every age.—Evils grievous in themselves, and frightful in their ultimate consequences, have been palliated by those who should have checked them;—have been admired, or have been cloaked; have been trumpeted, or have been excused; but never honestly and unsparingly dealt with.

No principle of morals can be more unsound than that which would excuse a man from guilt who cares not to rid himself of prejudices or of scruples that are ruinous to his fellows. If we do not owe the cultivation of common sense to ourselves, we assuredly owe it to those around us. No man can play the fool without peril to his neighbours; and when the Christian does so, he flings perdition on every side of him.

Those questions of ecclesiastical polity (if such there be) which involve real difficulties, and which wise men might hesitate to touch—uncertain and complicated as are all human affairs, may well be reserved until other points have been disposed of that demand nothing but the putting in force of the plainest principles of reason and piety. Who shall say how much light would suddenly come in upon the obscurer matters, if once the simpler were taken out of the way?

To adduce the specific instances, and to deal with them equitably, would consist neither with the limits nor the purpose of this volume. It is principles only we have to do with; and in the establishment of general truths, must still adhere to the rule of drawing examples from the remotest quarters. In closing then this Section, let a single instance, illustrative of the purport of it, be glanced at.

The ancient Church might stand excused from the blame of defending, with too much acrimony, the great elements of Christian faith, assailed as they were by a hundred heresies, audacious and absurd; and let indulgence be afforded in relation to those divisions in matters of discipline which might fairly perplex honest minds. We look now to instances of that sort which entailed extreme contempt upon Christianity, and sullied all its glory, for the sake of pertinacious scruples ineffably trivial. If the

case adduced be thought altogether without parallel in modern times, let it be rejected as impertinent.

Be it imagined that the accomplished author of the treatise "on the Sublime," hitherto imperfectly informed of the Christian doctrine, and doubtful of its claims, had at length resolved to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with a religion which was then spreading through all parts of the world, and spreading in defiance of imperial edicts and popular fury. The philosophic Longinus has learned in a vague manner that the Christians profess the hope of a glorious immortality—that they hold elevated opinions concerning the Divine nature, and that they treat with derision the idle mythologies and immoral superstitions of all nations; [17] and

[17] Juvenal and Lucian had led the way in the work which the Christian writers achieved, of consigning the Grecian mythology to contempt. Popular veneration toward the gods had almost entirely been loosened by railleries which drew their irresistible force from common sense. When the Christians brought the heavy arms of pure truth to bear upon these decayed absurdities, the victory could not be long doubtful. The Church at this time commanded the services of many writers qualified by vigorous talents, wit, and extensive learning, for the part assigned them. Some of the pieces then produced with the design of exposing polytheism to merited contempt, are of the highest merit.—Such for example as—The admirable and erudite work of Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*, addressed to the Antonines:—The *Oratio ad Græcos* of Tatian:—The caustic *Irrisio Philos. Gentil.* of Hermias, which, though aimed at the philosophic sects, went also to undermine the popular superstitions.—Justin Martyr claims a distinguished place in the list, especially on account of his excellent Paræenetic to the Greeks. The *Admonitio ad Græcos* of the learned Clemens Alexandrinus is of great value, and contains a fund of various erudition. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, takes his part in the

he is told that this system is affirmed to have been imparted immediately from God. He expects then that whether the alleged revelation be true or false, it will offer nothing but what is momentous and simply great:—he is justified in expecting nothing else. While he yet revolves his purpose of inquiry, there falls by chance into his hands an epistle addressed by a distinguished contemporary — a Christian bishop, to a colleague. The writer, known to him already by common fame, stands entitled on every ground to respect. Head of the Alexandrian Church, and therefore second to few or none in official importance, a man of extensive learning too—no barbarian; but versed, like himself, in the poets, orators, and philosophers of Greece:—a man of tried integrity, who had endured severe sufferings and banishment in defence of his faith; a man moreover of settled moderation, and calm judgment, one who was appealed to by all parties as umpire.—Such was Dionysius of Alexandria;—and as such, not improbably, might he have been known to his contemporary, Longinus.[18]

same labour. Tertullian mightily assails the folly and impurity of the popular worship; and not least is the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. These, and other erudite and eloquent labours of the early church, which no doubt highly conduced to the ultimate triumph of the Gospel throughout the empire, merit more than admiration — PERUSAL.

[18] As Principal of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Dionysius had early diffused his reputation very widely. He was esteemed one

If then indeed Christianity be a sublime doctrine, if it be a revelation of future life; if it be a philosophy imparted by God himself to man, it must dignify its adherents, it must imbue them with a grave and manly reason, it must exempt them from the servile and childish superstitions that enslave the vulgar. Fraught with these proper anticipations, the philosophic inquirer opens the letter of the Alexandrian prelate.[19] Although not qualified justly to estimate those expressions of meekness and simplicity which present themselves on the face of it—a style so unlike that of the schools, his candour is conciliated by the modesty of a man whose station might have rendered him arrogant.[20]

"Dionysius to Basilides, my beloved son, and brother, and colleague in the Lord—greeting.—You wrote to me, my faithful and learned son, concerning the hour at which fasting should cease in celebrating the Paschal solemnity. You report that certain of the fraternity (of

of the most distinguished of Origen's pupils. Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* l. vi. c. 35—40.

[19] The canonic epistle of Dionysius, quoted above, is of unquestioned authenticity. It is accessible to the reader in *Routh's Reliquiæ Sacræ*, Vol. II.

[20] Dionysius, after giving advices on sundry points of discipline, then deemed important, thus concludes—"In these things (concerning which, to do us honour, not because you are yourself unable to judge, you have propounded questions) I advance my opinion, not as Master διδάσκαλος, but with all simplicity, and as it is becoming that we should, on terms of mutuality, discuss any subject of debate. Concerning this my opinion you, learned son, when you have considered it, will write to me again, either approving my decision, or proposing a better." How well, had this style been copied by Church dignitaries!

Pentapolis) affirm that the fast should end, and our rejoicings commence, at the moment of cock-crowing; while others say it should be from the evening. The brethren of Rome, as the former assert, are accustomed to await the crowing of the cock; whereas, on our part, as you say, an earlier hour is observed. Your desire is to ascertain with precision *the very moment,* and to fix decisively the proper hour; but to do so is a difficult and uncertain thing. All are indeed perfectly agreed on this one point—That, from the instant of our Lord's resurrection, festivity and gladness should commence; and that, on the other hand, fasting and humiliation of spirit are proper in the preceding time. But yourself, in your epistle—versed as you are in the divine evangelic records, have shewn that nothing is to be certainly gathered from the Gospels concerning the hour of the resurrection. The Evangelists, in their several modes of narrating the event, declare that all who, at different times, visited the sepulchre, found the Lord already risen. Yet we assume that they neither disagree, nor oppose each other as to the fact; and inasmuch as the point has become the subject of controversy, as if there were a want of consistency among the Evangelists, let us, with due humility and caution, endeavour to trace out their real agreement."

Then follows a careful examination of the evidence, in concluding which the good bishop

manifestly endeavours so to pronounce upon the perplexing matter as should corroborate strict and godly discipline, without absolutely precluding indulgence toward the feeble, or even the lax. "Those," says he, "who, being presently wearied, hasten to break their fast, even before midnight, we must blame as negligent and incontinent. It is not a little, according to the adage, to fall short in the course, *by a little.* But on the contrary, those who hold out until the fourth watch of the night, we deem to be noble and strenuous. Yet will we not angrily assail[21] any who, either from want of strength, or of fixed resolution, seek refreshment sooner."

These unquestionably are the tones of moderation and of wisdom: the style well becomes the Christian pastor and the bishop. But what was the controversy itself? And what impression must the anxious agitation of questions such as these have made upon men of enlarged understanding, who looked at the new religion from a distance, and with cold curiosity? To return for a moment to our supposition;—must we not regard Longinus as almost excused, if he had cast away the epistle of Dionysius with indignant scorn, and have said—"Is this your vaunted Christianity? Is it to maintain this system of servile frivolity that you die at the stake? Do you ask me to become a Christian?

[21] μὴ πάνυ διενοχλῶμεν.

as well turn Jew:—and how much better remain philosopher!"

The fault in the instance we have adduced was not that of a want of temper; for we must admire the mild and conciliatory tone of the writer, vested as he was with authority: nor was it a fault to endeavour to ascertain (if the means of doing so had been at hand) a circumstance of an event beyond all others worthy of earnest regard. But the error—and a fatal error in its consequences, was that of admitting *religious importance* to attach to a particular which confessedly lay beyond the range of revelation, and had been made no part of Christian duty. Not only was the point abstractedly trivial, but it was the subject of no injunction. How could it be imagined, unless through a circuit of false assumptions, that conscience was implicated in an observance concerning which, not only was there no explicit command, but no certain evidence bearing upon the fact whereon the observance rested? Granting the paschal solemnities to have been acceptable religious services, and granting it to have been a pious act to fast in commemoration of the Lord's death and burial, and to celebrate his return to life with hymns, illuminations, and other festivities, yet, as by the acknowledgment of all, except zealots, the precise moment in which sorrow was turned into gladness could not be ascertained, and must remain mere matter of surmise, was it not

an egregious violation of common sense to make such a point the subject of anxious controversy, and the occasion of ecclesiastical disunion?

Dionysius, it is true, writes and decides much more like a Christian than like a supercilious dignitary, and if all had been such as himself, the foolish disagreement must soon have been forgotten. But what was likely to happen in the distracted parish of Basilides? A few perhaps, the lovers of peace, would hail with joy the patriarchal decision. Not so the fervent and the dogmatic; not so those whose piety meant nothing apart from virulence. Such—and are there not such in every community?—would listen to the canonic letter, when publicly read in the Church, with clouded visages; they would exchange among themselves glances of insolent dissent; they would cluster about the church doors after the assembly had broke up, would gather to themselves open-mouthed hearers, would inveigh against the easiness and worldly indifference of men in high station; they would impeach the motives and the piety, first of the Alexandrian patriarch, and then of his surrogate—their own pastor. The intrinsic merits of the question would be hotly agitated, and its vital importance be insisted upon: the consciences of the feeble and the scrupulous, of women and slaves, would be entangled and placed at the disposal of the despotic leaders of the sect. These

leaders, committed to a course of open opposition, would find it necessary to have recourse to every means of exaggeration and irritation tending to sustain the zeal of their adherents. A breach with the Church would be deemed indispensable for securing the rights of conscience: fellowship must be refused, first with the general body of believers; next with those who, though holding mainly with themselves in the question at issue, yet hesitated to adjudge Christendom entire to perdition on account of its error in this single point. Lastly (if indeed the absurdity of intolerance ever reaches an ultimate stage) lastly, all correspondence must be cut off with whoever would not denounce the moderate middle men above named. In the end, the little flaming nucleus of immaculate rigidity, fasting till broad day of Easter Sunday, and blessing itself in the straitness of its circle, would be able to look down upon all the world, and upon all the church, as wrong and lost! Meanwhile the amiable Dionysius grieves, and prays too for the contumacious band. But should he not remember that the faction drew its consequence from his own error in granting, for a moment, that Christian duty and conscience could be at all concerned in a controversy of this frivolous sort? Should he not have known that if men are encouraged by persons of sense and authority to attach importance to idle scrupulosities, they will not fail

to forget solid morality, as well as to spurn meekness and love?

The follies of one age differ from those of another in names only. Let those boast of the intelligence of the nineteenth century, who think it furnishes no parallels to the infatuations of the third. It is often anxiously asked—What hinders the progress of the Gospel in a country like our own, and in an age of liberty and knowledge? It might be quite enough to reply, that the hinderance is drawn from the form of impertinent and childish discord which has been thrown over it by some of its most devoted adherents. If then our Christianity does not triumph as it ought, we will not vex at the infidelity of Longinus; but mourn the superstition of Dionysius.

SECTION IX.

THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE NOT FANATICAL.

(THE OLD TESTAMENT.)

THE mind seeks refreshment in contemplating Truth, after conversing long with the follies and crimes that mark as well the religious as the civil history of nations. A tranquil delight, a delight enhanced by contrast, is felt when we return to set foot upon that solid ground of reason and purity which the Scriptures open before us. How melancholy soever, or revolting may be the spectacle of human affairs, a happier prospect is within view.—In the religion of the Bible there is certainty—there is unsullied goodness—there is divinity. Let the inferences be what they may—and we should take care they are sound, which we feel compelled to draw from the general course of events, it remains always true that the

writings of the prophets and apostles present a system of belief, an order of sentiments, and a rule of morals such as are altogether consistent with the highest conceptions we can form of the Divine attributes. The Bible is God's revelation: none doubt it who retain the integrity of the moral faculty, who command the powers of reason, and who are informed of what has been in every age the actual condition of human nature. The Scriptures are from Heaven. Yet we will not now assume this truth, but narrowly examine (on a single and peculiar line of argument) the proof of it.

Let it then be premised that it is not by avoiding occasions of danger, but by efficiently providing against them, that the Scriptures lead man through the difficult paths of the spiritual world. The most critical positions which the human mind can occupy are freely entered upon by the writers of the Bible;—all hazards are run, and a clear triumphant course is pursued through all. If an affirmation such as this be deemed loose or declamatory, and more easily advanced than substantiated, let strict attention be given to the historic facts and documents whence a conclusion should be drawn: in entering upon this ground no favour is implored, no rigour of scrutiny is deprecated. We ask for what we may demand—a verdict according to the evidence.

On all questions relating to the alleged practical influence of opinions, the rational inquiry plainly is—Not what seems the tendency of single elements of the system;—but in what manner are its various elements balanced and harmonized? Who does not know that Effects are, in every case, whether physical or intellectual, as the *combined causes* which concur to produce them? If at any time certain ingredients of religious truth have been drawn apart, and grossly abused, to the injury of the parties themselves, and to the scandal of others, the fault is not in the inspired Book. The sacred writers require nothing short of a submission to that complete and duly-adjusted system of motives which they promulgate; and it would have been a virtual dereliction of their authority to have made provision against the misuse of those *single principles* which can produce no mischief so long as they are held in combination.

Boldness—the boldness of simplicity is the style of the Bible from first to last. Nowhere does it exhibit that sort of circumspection which distinguishes the purblind and uncertain discretion of man. Man, if cautious at all, is overcautious, and must be so, because he knows little of the remote relations of things, and almost nothing of their future consequences. Although one event only shall actually occur,

in a given case, five or ten that are possible must be provided for. But the Divine Omniscience saves itself all such wasted anxieties, and takes a direct course to its proposed end; an end it had foreseen from the beginning. A difference of the very same sort distinguishes human and divine operations whenever brought into comparison.—The former abound with provisions and precautions against possible accidents; but in the latter, provision is made only against actual and foreseen evils; and therefore when examined on principles of human science, often seem—shall we say—unsafe and incomplete.

To take the separate ingredients of religion as they may be gathered from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, one might find in them, *apart*, every incitement of those perverted sentiments, which, in fact, through the course of ages, have borrowed a pretext from the Bible. No conceivable method of conveying complex principles could afford security against such a misuse of the heavenly boon. If men will sever that which God has joined, nothing remains but that they should receive into their bosoms the fruit of their temerity. The inspired writers, as may be proved in the most convincing manner, were themselves no fanatics; nor will their readers ever become such, while they admit that complement of motives which the theology of the Scriptures includes.

We have said that the Bible does not avoid difficult positions, nor evade critical and delicate affirmations, as for example.—

Neither the Prophets nor the Apostles, in the representations they make of the Divine Nature affect that vague and theoretic style which pleases philosophy. On the contrary, they advance without solicitude into the very midst of the most appalling conceptions of the Supreme Majesty. And instead of affirming what they have to affirm with an accompaniment of extenuations, apologies, and cautions, they employ language, pungent and vigorous in the highest degree, and leave the whole force of their emphatic phrases to press, without relief, upon the imagination and consciences of men. Those very passages of terror which the Fanatic delights to rehearse, he may find, if he will subtract them from their places. Yes, and when he enters into controversy with men of an opposite temperament, who will admit nothing into their theology but what is lenient, he easily triumphs over them by adducing decisive examples of a sort which can never be reconciled with such effeminate opinions. The Divine Being, as made known to mankind by Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel; or by Christ himself, and Paul and James, is not the quiescent and complacent Power which Theists fondly paint. Rather is He terrible in his anger, jealous of his honour, and not to be approached without fear.

We find moreover, very prominently in the Holy Scriptures, that doctrine of the universal degeneracy of mankind, and of the consequent displacency of God, which waits only for misinterpretation and exaggeration, to become what the fanatic demands, as the second capital excitement of his malign and vindictive temper.[1] The human race, he will say, is fallen—is foul—is guilty: may it not then, ought it not to be *religiously hated?* Is not man spiritually abominable? Can any expressions of detestation—can any severities of treatment, be deemed excessive or improper on the part of the few who, loyally taking side with God against the rebel race, would speak and act in a manner becoming the boldness of a true allegiance? Thus, and with some appearance of reason too, may the fanatic justify his gloomy mood.

To complete the apology which he might frame for the out-bursts of his arrogance, and for his factious proceedings, he will allege (and so will obtain possession of his third excitement[2]) that the entire history and economy of Revelation turns upon the principle of special favours granted to nations, to families, and to individuals, who have been honoured and benefited by immense advantages, notwithstanding enormous delinquencies. In fact it is upon this very ground that fanatics of every age—Jewish,

[1] Page 81. [2] Page 84.

Mohammedan, and Christian, have taken their stand.

Picked passages may thus be made to furnish all that is wanted to warrant the rancour and presumption of the malign religionist. But how poorly will he defend himself when the great and unalterable principles of biblical religion are duly brought together, and are made to bear in harmony upon the heart! The effect then is altogether of an opposite kind; so much so, that even the enemies of the Gospel have been compelled to confess that our Bible is the fountain of compassion, the rule of benignity, and the very doctrine of meekness. That such is indeed the fact, may be sustained *first* in the mode of a comprehensive statement of principles; and then in the method of a careful induction of specific instances. The importance of the subject will justify our pursuing, for a while, both these lines of proof.

We have then to make good, *first* on general grounds, the affirmation that the Religion of the Bible is not of fanatical tendency.

When the delusions of a depraved self-esteem are thoroughly dispelled, so that moral and spiritual objects affect, as they ought, the conscience of a man, then, what before acted as the excitement of spurious zeal, or as the occasion of malevolence, takes salutary possession of the mind, and produces the mild fruits of piety and charity.

Thus, for example, if the awful justice of God be truly understood as the necessary condition of that purity which is essential to the Divine Nature, and as a mode only of Sovereign Benevolence, then an inference from this truth comes home with weight upon the personal consciousness of guilt; and he who thus sees his own peril in the light of the divine justice, is thenceforth mainly occupied with those emotions of shame and fear, which are proper to a culprit. The wish to make a vindictive application of the same truth to others (though it be applicable) is forgotten, or becomes abhorrent to the soul. This surely is not a mere refinement, or an evasion of the difficulty.—If the fearful retributive energy of the Divine Character be a truth, and a prime truth of Scripture, upon whom does it bear?—Upon all transgressors, without exception, and therefore upon each singly.—"But I am such," says the now convicted man, "and to *me* God is terrible, inasmuch as He has the power and the determination to punish sin." The entire current of ideas is in this manner turned, when once a belief of personal danger has been thoroughly awakened; and so it happens that the man who, yesterday, was hurling thunderbolts at his fellows, and exulting in the displays of divine displeasure, may now be seen prostrate, as in the dust, and unmindful of every thing but his own peril. Nothing more is needed to bring about so great a change, but that the

Divine attributes should be truly understood in the relation they bear to personal responsibility.

Pursuing the same path, we come to the second excitement of religious malevolence, as before enumerated; that is to say—The universal corruption of human nature, and the actual guilt of all men. But is it true that this pravity is of a spiritual kind, and does it affect the depth of the human heart? Then—a spiritual knowledge of the doctrine implies a vivid and expanded CONSCIOUSNESS of the fact, as the moral condition of the individual. To an enlightened conscience this personal knowledge of the evil bias of the heart, is nothing less than an interpretation, *vivâ voce*, of the Scripture doctrine of the corruption of human nature. Mankind at large is spiritually abominable in no other sense than that in which "I am so;" and a close and serious familiarity with the subject seldom fails to impart to each mind an *impression*, as if the corruption of the individual heart were more deep and deplorable than that of others. "If other men are objects of the divine displacency —I much more;" such, whether in fact true or not, is the language (in very many cases) of genuine contrition. But this introversion of feeling places the dogma altogether on another footing than it might before have occupied. Will there remain in a bosom that entertains these emotions of shame and compunction

any residue of arrogance or of malice towards the mass of mankind, because sharers in the same depravity? Surely not. On the contrary, a tender sympathy, a patient forbearance, and the liveliest zeal of benevolence are found to consist with the feeling of personal humiliation.—The fanatic, with his misanthropy and his scorn, is quite shut out.—He—infatuated man—knows nothing of himself, and therefore has no indulgence for others. Let the doctrine of the corruption of human nature be expounded as it may, or even in some sense exaggerated, it will remain innoxious, so long as it thoroughly penetrates the soul that receives it; the principle becomes poisonous, only when thrown out and suffused.

The constituent motives of genuine contrition seal the exclusion of arrogance from the heart of the penitent, even when a hope of the special favour of God is entertained with the utmost distinctness. If it be true, as the Scriptures affirm, that this favour towards individuals is absolutely free—if it comes irrespectively of original merit, and if the continuance of the temper of humiliation is the fixed condition upon which a consciousness of it is granted to the believer, then nothing can be felt, in looking at home, but simple gratitude; and no emotion indulged, in looking abroad, but the desire that others should partake of boons of which all have equal need, and of which none can claim to be worthy.

The lurking notion on which the fanatic builds his self-gratulations, when he glances at the herd of men, is that they are, by the stern law of some intrinsic disqualification, for ever excluded from the hope of participating in the divine favour. His arrogance is of a patrician sort; and he would fain persuade himself that an eternal impossibility bars the access of others to the narrow ground he occupies. But the CHRISTIAN — taught from the Bible, learns a lesson the very reverse of this.—Commissioned and enjoined, as he is, to invite "ALL MEN, every where to repent and believe the Gospel," exclusiveness of feeling is denied him; nor can he harbour that grudging of grace, which distinguishes the fanatic. Are the blessings of Christianity actually enjoyed only by few? Yes alas, but the Christian (by plain inference from his principles) is taught to impute it to himself and his associates, as a fault that such is the fact. Far from thinking himself entitled to rest inertly upon the sunny spot of Heavenly favour where he reclines, he knows himself to be bound to take no ease until his neighbour—nay until all men obtain a share in his privilege. If, at a first glance, it might seem that the peculiarity of the Gospel gives sanction to fanatical presumption, we can no longer think so when we recollect the solemn responsibility laid upon all Christians to propagate their faith by the mild methods of instruction. How is

it possible for a man selfishly to contemn others on account of a privilege or distinction which he holds on the express condition of imparting it, by every means of persuasion, to all around him? No one surely can, at the same moment, be diligently scattering a benefit—and exulting in his exclusive possession of it.

The scheme of religious sentiment contained in the Scriptures, wants then only to be received, such as it is, without deduction—without addition; and to be received as the object of personal feeling, and it becomes altogether benign in its influence. Experience may be appealed to in proof of this assertion; but our present purpose demands that we turn to the Inspired Writings, and examine, in a number of instances, the character and tendency of the sentiments they recommend. We have also to ascertain, if it can be done, what were the personal dispositions of the writers; and to see whether those who promulgated this religion were themselves free from the malign temper of the Fanatic.

Peculiar considerations enhance the importance of the inquiry we have in hand. The fact (already adverted to) is not to be denied, that the Jewish people, from the period when their affairs find a place on the page of general history, exhibit an extraordinary instance of national religious rancour, and stand forth almost as THE FANATICS by eminence of the ancient world. It becomes then a question by

no means frivolous—When did this malign temper first make its appearance; and whence did it derive its special motives, and its aggravations? Now fairly to deal with such a question, we should of course look to the religious institutes of the people, as contained in their sacred writings, as well as examine the facts and circumstances of their subsequent history. The latter we have already briefly considered;[3] the former is now our business.

Nothing is at any time to be gained in the behalf of religion by attempting to screen the Inspired Books from the fair scrutiny to which as *historical documents* merely, they may be liable. If the pious frauds and forgeries that once were accounted lawful and praiseworthy, are to be shunned and spoken of with detestation; so, doubtless, should we avoid and renounce all those indirect procedures in matters of argument, which partake of the same spirit. Whoever is so happy as to possess an intelligent conviction of the divine origin of the Bible, feels himself free from the anxiety which has its source in ignorance and infirmity of judgment.

We have before remarked that the influence of a system is not to be judged of by the single elements it may contain; but by that balance of motives for which it provides. Let then this

[3] Pages 273—280.

equitable principle be borne in mind while we take a survey of the Jewish institutions (so far as they relate to our subject) and of the revelations that were, in the course of ages, grafted upon the Mosaic economy.

The first grand peculiarity of the Hebrew polity, civil and sacred, was (it need hardly be said) the seclusion of the race from the great community of mankind.—Now it is certain that a privileged seclusion, and especially a sacred one, tends, on the ordinary principles of human nature, to beget unsocial and fanatical sentiments. This general truth might be admitted, even in the fullest extent, and room would yet be left to allege, that an incidental or possible evil of this sort was well compensated by the momentous purpose of which that separation was the necessary means;—the purpose being nothing less than the preservation in the world of the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and the maintenance of a pure moral code as the law of an entire people. But we leave untouched any such ground of apology, and prefer to ask—In what style or terms was the seclusion of the Hebrew race effected? The answer must be, that it was brought about in a mode so mortifying to the common emotions of national pride, that the endurance of it on the part of a rude and factious people is no slender proof that the Legislator, in the first instance, and

after him the Prophets, were sustained in the exercise of their authority by miraculous powers. Nothing can be imagined more vehemently at variance with the usual practice and policy of founders of nations, or more unlike the tones of patriotic bards, than is the language incessantly repeated by Moses, and by the inspired teachers, as they succeed each other through the course of ages. One is actually tempted to suppose that he and they aimed at nothing so much as to feel and ascertain the extreme limit of their power over the popular mind, by outraging to the utmost its self-love and vanity.

Whatever momentary objurgations might have had place between the Hebrew leader and the refractory tribes that followed him into the desert, or whatever terms of reproach might have been used by him on particular occasions, it did not seem necessary that such expressions of indignation — almost of scorn, which the provocation of the time called forth, should be recorded and should be mingled inseparably with the national code and history, and so be handed down to posterity. Unless a definite and very peculiar object had been in view, what Legislator, guided by common sense, would have so enhanced the probability that his code should soon be consigned to oblivion as is done by inserting, almost on every page throughout his Institutes, the most

obnoxious and disparaging epithets, and the most humiliating narrations?—Surely a higher wisdom than that of the human legislator is here apparent;—or else there is *less* wisdom than the most simple of mankind are gifted with. Are we not compelled to confess, if the case be attentively considered, that a special provision is made in the Pentateuch for counteracting that national arrogance which the favoured seclusion of the people was of itself likely to engender? This same code of sacred privilege, and of separation from the bulk of mankind, which the priests were enjoined perpetually to rehearse in the ears of the people—this Law, which was not only to be cherished in the heart, but to be "taught diligently unto children—to be talked of in the house and in the way—in lying down, and in rising up; which was to be bound as a sign upon the hand, and as frontlets between the eyes, which was to be inscribed upon the door-posts and upon the gates of the city:"[4]—this same law, so reiterated, and so forced upon the memory, carried with it incessant and pointed rebukes of the national vanity. It was one thing for Moses to have pungently upbraided a contumacious populace in moments of sedition; and quite another for him to consign these same reproaches to perpetuity, by weaving them into his history, and by wedging them between his

[4] Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8; and xi. 18.

statutes. Yet so we find them in scores of places.—"Ye are a stiff-necked people, an evil nation;—I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; therefore now put off thine ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee."[5]

A most explicit and particular caution against the indulgence of national pride is given by the Leader of the Hebrew tribes when, on the very borders of the promised land, he announced to the people the terrible part they were to act as executioners of the divine displeasure upon the corrupted occupants of the soil.—Can we read it without admiration of the courage of Moses;—or without conviction of his divine legation? "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast out the nations from before thee, saying—For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land. But for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land.—Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; *for thou art a stiff-necked people.* Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came into this

[5] Exod. xxxiii. 5.

place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord. —Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you."[6]

Or if it had been the intention of their Leader indirectly, yet effectually to allay the pride and youthful exultation of the people, just bursting as they were upon the stage of political existence, and just setting foot upon the career of conquest, nothing could have been done, or thought of, more conducive to such a purpose, than the uttering that tremendous comminative prediction of the ultimate miseries of the nation, with which he takes leave of them. On any ordinary principles it might justly have been supposed that those prophetic curses, upon which history has made so long and sad a comment, would have operated either to break the heart of the people, or to have utterly disaffected their minds to a religious system that entailed penalties so dreadful. And the more so, when a confident or positive announcement of the actual issue was subjoined to the exhibition of blessings and curses. —"I call heaven and earth to record against you.—For I KNOW that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days."[7]

In terms then, such as these, was it that the seclusion and the sacred privileges of the

[6] Deut. ix. 4—7, 24. [7] Deut. xxxi. 27—29.

race were, in the first instance, sanctioned! And the tone set by Moses was chimed-in with by each of the seers and poets in the long succession of ages. The buddings of religious antional insolence we find to be nipped at once, and with a stern severity, by each divinely-commissioned personage, as he comes on the stage of sacred history. Reproof, reproach, if not contempt, is the characteristic of the Jewish canonical writings. Nor is so much as one passage to be found there, the tendency of which is to cherish the feeling that might naturally have sprung from a conscious enjoyment of prerogatives and honours conferred upon the nation by the Sovereign of the Universe. Joshua, captain and conqueror, like Moses the legislator, surrenders his charge and dies, with language on his lips of discouragement and mistrust.[8]

A particular and yet remarkable instance of the care taken to damp the arrogance of the people is found in the form of thanksgiving that was put into the mouth of the Israelite when summoned to offer the first-fruits of the year to the Lord. "And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days," with the basket of fruits in hand, "and thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God — A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned

[8] Josh. xxiv. 15—27.

there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous."[9] Let it be observed, as we pass, that the entire profession, including as it does all the elements of piety and benevolence, might with much effect be placed by the side of the festal liturgies of other nations, wherein the exorbitant absurdities of national vanity have usually been indulged without restraint.

But to that venerable book of sacred odes and public anthems, of which the founder of the Israelitish monarchy was the chief author, we ought naturally to look for the evidence we are in search of.—Was, we ask, that spiritual superciliousness which religious privilege and seclusion are wont to engender, cherished, or was it repressed—was it authenticated, or was it mortified, by the divinely-sanctioned poetry of the Hebrew people, and by the choruses of the Temple? First let the peculiar circumstances of the people and of their prince at the juncture when the Psalms came into general use, be considered.—After four centuries of political disquiet and distress;—centuries of long depression and transient triumph, and just after the failure of the people's first essay at royalty, the nation had rallied, had mustered its spirits, had become invasive, had imposed fear in turn upon all its neighbours, had trodden on the necks of its ancient oppressors, and was now fast coming

[9] Deut. xxvi. 4—10.

into quiet possession of the signal advantages of its soil and position:—the Hebrew people was rising from the dust and putting on the attire of the bridegroom, and was soon to abash its rivals by the splendours, as well as by the strength of national prosperity. And all this dazzling advancement was taking place under the hand of an obscurely-born captain, whom, in the style of common history, we should call an adventurer, and whose unstable power demanded the support of all available means of popularity.

At the very same moment the primitive worship, as enjoined to the people by Moses, was restored and settled, and its services expanded and adorned. This then assuredly was the season in which the politic and heroic founder of a monarchy would endeavour to exalt to the highest pitch the national enthusiasm, and would labour to exacerbate all well founded pretensions; and especially to throw into the shade, or utterly to blot out, if possible, the anciently recorded dishonours of the nation. Shall we not find him avoiding, as by instinct, the obsolete themes of the people's dishonour? His discretion surely will impel him — king and poet as he is, to strike another wire. No, it is quite otherwise, for this man of incipient and uncertain fortune, this nursling of the sheepfold and the desert, employs the powers of song for no such purposes whatever. David wielded

those two sceptres, of which the one often proves quite as potent as the other, in the instance of an unsophisticated people. The warrior-king, is Seer and Bard; and it is he who gives forth the sacred anthems of public worship! Rare conjunction of talents and powers! how shall such choice means be employed, so as most effectually to enhance the proud patriotism of the people—to blend that patriotism with the influence of religion, and, not least, to shed the delusive splendour of poetry and fable over the early history of the race? On all grounds of ordinary calculation, and on every known principle of human nature, and according to the uniform tenor of history, we should expect nothing less in the Psalms of David than mythic exaggeration, mixed up with the stirring elements of sacred and civil fanaticism. But are these compositions of any such sort? Nothing can be more widely opposed to the anticipations we might have formed. These sacred odes and solemn anthems subserve no purposes of kingly policy, and can be explained only when we adopt the belief which a single apostolic phrase condensely expresses—that David "spake by the Holy Ghost."

Before we turn to particular passages, it is pertinent to notice the general spirit of the poems attributed to David. It must be confessed then that an air of sadness pervades them. They abound with prayers under pressure of

calamity; and are thick set with the sighs and tears of a heavy heart. Nothing indicates that the royal lyre was at all thought of as an instrument of ambition: — the exploits and triumphs of the young hero, though chaunted by the damsels of Zion, are not made the themes of his own song. Let it be affirmed that they were composed in the early years of his exile, and under privation; yet they were not afterwards supplanted by verse more befitting the glories of kingly state.

The fifteenth, which is the first of these compositions that plainly seems intended for public worship, is severely didactic; and comes to its close without a single note of joy. That noble ode (the 18th) which, more than any other, is exultant, being the one that signalizes the final triumph of David over his domestic foes, is remarkable for those often-repeated phrases that attribute the entire success of his course to divine interposition:—if it be a conqueror that speaks in these metres, he is such because the instrument of power from on high. Nor is the pride of the nation, any more than that of the prince, flattered, through the course of the psalm. The same spirit reappears on each similar occasion:—it is piety, not pride, that inspires the song of gratulation. As thus:—"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." The 24th psalm, like the 15th, is

manifestly a triumphant anthem, to which all the powers of music should give effect, when the congregated people met on the hill of Zion. First mindful of the great principles of practical virtue, apart from which all worship is mockery, it swells into the loftiest strain of celestial rapture. — But who is the hero — and what is the subject?—not David;—it is not he whose approach is announced as "the glorious King," and whose entrance upon the precincts of worship is to be proclaimed by blast of trumpets. But "The Lord of hosts—HE is the King of glory!" Judged of by the severest rules of criticism, can there be detected in this impassioned anthem even so much as a stain of royal vanity or of national arrogance? Or to bring the question close home to our subject, does it appear that, to foment the fanaticism of this secluded people was the ruling intention of its sacred poetry? We appeal for an answer to those who have read history, and are not ignorant of human nature.

The care of morals, and a prompt jealousy for the Divine honour, meet us wherever we might most expect (on natural principles) to find excitements of another sort. Let the reader pursue this scrutiny, and adduce, if they exist, any contrary instances; especially let him look to such of these odes as have a prophetic aspect (for the future, even more than the past, is apt to inflame the imagination) or to those which seem

designed for public worship—the worship of an assembled nation. The historical odes are not less remarkably abstinent of flattery to the popular feeling, and indeed must be deemed altogether unparalleled instances of national poetic records, inasmuch as the spirit and design of each of them is penitential, rather than exultant. Such is the recapitulation of the Mosaic story in the 78th Psalm. — What were the things that had been "heard and known," and which "the fathers had told" to the sons? not marvellous tales of prowess, and the conquest of monsters and titans;—but the rebellions of the people's ancestors, and the patience of their God. And this same recapitulation was enjoined as a "statute for ever," that each generation, as it rose up, might learn to "set their hope in God, and not forget his works; but keep his commandments; and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation—a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God." We should mark the close of this mortifying recital, which ends in the establishment of the throne of David, who was "taken from the sheepfolds, and from following the ewes great with young!" A climax this, which, though quite in harmony with the spirit of the poem, and of the collection, certainly does not betray much, either of royal arrogance, or of fabulous exaggeration.

The same themes, treated in nearly the same

spirit, present themselves in the three consecutive odes (105, 6, 7; and also in the 135th); which last beautifully teaches the doctrine of divine providence, in the best of all methods, that of historical inference. To exalt Jehovah, to humble the people as *a race* that had never gratefully received, or duly improved its extraordinary privileges, is the purport of the whole; and in reading them it is impossible that a candid mind should charge the fault upon the ancient *literature*, any more than upon the primitive *institutions* of the Jewish people, if, in a subsequent age, the descendants of Abraham are found to have been distinguished by religious and national arrogance. That the highly important prerogatives of the race, as the chosen people of God, should be spoken of and rejoiced in, is only what piety and gratitude demand.—"The Lord sheweth his word unto Jacob; his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.—He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them."[10] This was nothing more than simple fact. But the statement of it is mixed with none of the scorn or virulence that betrays a fanatical temper, and which belonged to the Jew of a later era!

But did the prophets of after ages work upon that easily-excited feeling of spiritual vanity and rancour which, at the period of the Roman

[10] Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.

supremacy, and long afterwards, characterised the Jewish people? To answer this question we must cast the eye over the line of the prophetic ministry, from the age of HOSEA, to that of MALACHI, embracing a disturbed and eventful period of four hundred years. Every reader of the sacred documents knows that the impression which, as a mass, they make upon the mind, is that of a long lamentation, and a perpetual reproof. The function of the Hebrew prophet, of every era, if we were required to describe it in a single term, must be called an office of upbraiding. These venerable writings are immensely remote from that colour of exaggeration and flattery which belongs to the rhapsodies of the Bard among passionate and rude nations. The virulence of Jewish pride, it is certain, had not its source in the page of the prophets, any more than in the odes of David. But we are to adduce passages.

"I have hewed them by the prophets;—I have slain them by the words of my mouth."[11] — Descriptive metaphor! not only proper to the past, but truly anticipative of what was to be the general strain of the prophetic message in succeeding ages. The goodness of both branches of the Hebrew stock, was, we are told by Hosea, "like a morning cloud, and as the early dew;" and of both nations this ancient seer declares, that, "they had forgotten their Maker, and

[11] Hosea vi. 5.

were like a deceitful bow. — Israel is an empty vine:"—"he has deeply corrupted himself."[12]— Both Israel and Judah are invited to return to their God; but it must be with hearty humiliations. In not a sentence of this venerable composition can we detect an indication of the existence, at that time, of the spiritual presumption which afterwards marked the temper of the people; much less is any such spirit favoured by the prophet: on the contrary, a tone of disparagement distinguishes the whole of the prophecy.

A remarkable rebuke of that malign complacency in the execution of Divine wrath which is too often admitted by gloomy and turbid minds, meets us in the book of JONAH.—"Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city?"[13]—Such is the style of the compassion of Heaven (indubitable mark of genuineness) and how unlike the petulance of the seer, who would rather have stood by and have witnessed the instant destruction of an entire people, than that his own denunciations should seem to be falsified! If at any time we find, even in a prophet of Jehovah, a false sentiment—that sentiment is at once condemned and disowned;—so true is it that the Hebrew Scriptures, far from being of fanatical tendency, counteract every feeling of that order.

We descend the stream of time, yet do not descry, on either bank of the current, that

[12] Hosea vi. 4. viii. 14. x. 1. [13] Jonah iv. 11.

noxious growth of religious pride which we are in search of. We meet however with the most pertinent proofs of the truth of our general doctrine—That the Jewish people, though favoured and sequestered, and taught to think themselves advantaged beyond any other nation, was so dealt with on the part of the prophets as to divert at its very spring, the risings of spiritual presumption. Let us hear on this point the eloquent herdsman of Tekoa. "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel; against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, YOU ONLY HAVE I KNOWN OF ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH; THEREFORE I WILL PUNISH YOU FOR ALL YOUR INIQUITIES."[14] Pungent admixture of the counteractive elements of religious feeling! as if the privilege and distinction of the race were to be kept in mind, only as a special ground of dread and shame! If this single passage had been duly borne in mind and pondered by the zealots of the age of Vespasian, the fate and history of the people would have been other than they were. Each portion of the same prophecy mingles rebukes and promises, along with a stern enforcement of the capital principles of public justice, and as we read we are compelled to confess that the Seer was not one who, by whispering soft things in the ear of the great and the rich, made his

[14] Amos iii. 1, 2.

way from rustic obscurity to fortune. — "Your treading is on the poor; — ye take from him burdens of wheat; therefore (though) ye have built houses of hewn stone, ye shall not live in them: — I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins. — They afflict the just; they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate."[15] — Nor, on the other hand, did the prophet flatter the mass of the people by cherishing their religious insolence; for example — "I hate — I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. — Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. — But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream!"[16]

One of the most animated of all the prophetic descriptions of the future glory and prosperity of the descendants of Abraham, forms the sequel of an announcement of wrath immediately near. "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand; and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come:" and these two members of the prediction are made to hinge upon the fact of national repentance. "Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people."[17] A national hope, not so enveloped in a caution or reproof, is scarcely found on the sacred page.

Isaiah, the prophet who more clearly than any other, saw the bright futurity of his people's

[15] Amos v. 11, 12. [16] Amos v. 23, 24. [17] Joel i. 15. ii. 18.

glory, and who more distinctly than any other spoke of the Great Deliverer of mankind, observes invariably the rule his predecessors had adhered to—namely, of holding a tight check upon the emotions of national pride. This is the theme to which not merely he recurs on particular occasions, but which he places foremost, as if it were to be the text of his prophetic ministry. Mortifying exordium, truly, of his message to a nation, favoured of God! "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: —I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!—The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. — Ah, sinful nation; — a people laden with iniquity; — why should ye be stricken any more! — Ye will revolt more and more:— the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint!"[18] To dash to the ground the haughtiness of spurious piety is the very first business of the prophet. — "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth.— They are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them."[19]

[18] Isai. i. 2—5.

[19] Isai. i. 13. It would be superfluous to refer the diligent reader of the Bible to the many passages in this prophet which are pertinent

We might pause here, and after resigning (for a moment) all those claims on behalf of the sacred volume which do in fact overrule the question, demand, from competent and dispassionate minds, a reply on this simple historic point — Is the ancient Hebrew literature liable to the charge of cherishing national arrogance and religious rancour, or does it not rather provide against, and repress, and reprove the risings of any such odious temper? — Does it appear that Jewish fanaticism drew its authority from the prophets? Or another, and a parallel question might be put — Do the prophets — in that

to our present argument. If there are any who, while indulging unfavourable impressions of the religion of the Scriptures, have never bestowed serious attention upon the evidence whence alone a rational opinion can be drawn, and if this note should meet the eye of any such person, the author recommends him, after informing himself competently of the moral and religious condition of the European and Asiatic nations in the Homeric and succeeding age, and after dismissing from the mind every prepossession, and every modern association of ideas, to read, and to read continuously, the prophecy of Isaiah, and to note as he goes along, whatever bears upon the following capital points, namely:—

1. The unity, majesty, creative power, providential sway, justice, and placability of God.

2. The prime articles of morality — justice, temperance, mercy, and kindness toward the weak and oppressed.

3. The demerits and disgraces of the Jewish people; and the grounds of the favour nevertheless shewn them by God.

4. The anticipations and promises which relate to the world at large, and to an era of universal peace.

5. The negative, but immensely important merit which belongs to this writer, of abstaining from all ascetic, superstitious, or extravagant religious excitements.

Let it then be inquired if a book, having these distinctions, and produced when and where it was, does not proclaim beyond a doubt its own divinity.

style of which church history and later religious literature furnish ten thousand examples — *exalt the importance of religious services and ceremonies, to the disparagement of morals?* Fanaticism, as we well know, takes its rise in the hot-bed of this very corruption. Is this then the fault that attaches to the canonical writings of the Jews? Let the passage quoted just above, in which indignant reprobation is cast upon even the divinely appointed services of the national religion, when deformed as they were at that time by hypocrisy, be read in connexion with the verses that immediately follow: — "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."[20] These vigorous expressions seem intended, if one might so speak, to burn and scorch the very germs of spiritual pride, hypocrisy, and hatred out of the Jewish mind. — Certainly our conclusion gathers strength — That the Hebrew Scriptures are not Fanatical.

But inasmuch as it may have appeared, while traversing the ground we have lately passed over, as if every possible variety of fanaticism found its example somewhere among the extravagances exhibited by the Jewish people of a later age, and as if the fanaticism of Papal

[20] Isai. i. 16.

Christianity, and of Mohammedism too, were but another fashion of that which had its parentage with the Jew, it becomes especially necessary to demonstrate that this bad spirit did not draw its origin from the early and authentic books of that people, but, on the contrary, received from them every imaginable check.

Already, even in the age of Isaiah, the people, though not yet fanatics, had learned, it seems, to court delusion, and to bend their ear to religious flatteries. They "said to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things: speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits."[21] Yet this infatuated preference of lying oracles to the true, was not only rebuked at the moment, but the existence of so grievous a folly, in a people more highly favoured than any other, was to be recorded, and handed down as a warning to all future times. "Now go; write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, *that it may be for the time to come*, for ever and ever — That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord."[22] And we should observe, that if the vehement rebuke itself be remarkable, the transmission and preservation of it by the very parties against whom it was launched, as a perpetual reproach, yes, a reproach that was to vex the ear of each successive generation "for ever," is a still more

[21] Isai. xxx. 10. [22] Isai. xxx. 8.

striking fact. Why was not a passage, such as the above, silently dropped from the text by the scribes of a later age?—Why, but because within the solitary circle of Jewish history nothing happens in mere conformity with the ordinary impulses of human nature, but every thing indicates the immediate presence of a controlling power "not of men."

The latter and more consolatory portions of Isaiah's prophecy are (on another account) as remarkable as the earlier, and the more stern portion. In these no one can fail to notice the care with which the stirring hopes of the Israelitish people are severed from emotions of arrogance, and are connected with the spirit of humiliation, and with the remembrance of past offences. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—"I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."[23] That frequent theme—the singular obduracy of the national character, comes up wherever promises of restoration and triumph are to be afforded. "I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck an iron sinew, and thy brow brass:"—"thou wast called a transgressor from the womb."—"O that

[23] Isai. xi. 1, 2.

thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea!"[24]

The task of the prophets, as we have observed, was that almost always, of reproof and denunciation. But according to the principles of human nature this is a part, which, when it comes to be the chief business of a man's life, tends strongly to overcloud his spirit, and to embitter his temper; the more so when he has to deal with great affairs, and with men of high station—when he has to denounce national delinquencies—to arraign the noble, and to challenge even kings to answer for their faults. Let any one imagine himself to have received a commission of this sort, and that it were his office to chastise his country, and its rulers, year after year, with the fiery scourge of his lips.—What probably would be his temper—what the tone of his arrogance—what his self-sufficiency, and what that rancour which the contumacy of the common people, on the one hand, and the persecutions of the great on the other would, after a while, impart to his soul? Scarcely any instance of a sort like this, can be found within the range of modern history, that does not declare the extreme difficulty of avoiding sour or fanatical virulence, when the office of public reprover has to be discharged. Yet it was precisely in a position of this kind that the

[24] Isai. xlviii. 7, 18.

melancholic priest of Anathoth, JEREMIAH, stood, and stood alone, during the lapse of forty dismal years. Isaiah, his predecessor, had seen the evil afar off;—but Jeremiah actually waded through the troubled waters of national corruption, and desolation. Tumult, contumacy, injurious treatment, public ruin, and personal distresses, followed him from the commencement to the close of his career. Even if there be no room to expect, in the pages of one like Jeremiah, the indications of a wish to flatter the spiritual pride of the people, may we not confidently look there for the symptoms of that PERSONAL FANATICISM—that malign acerbity, which ordinarily belongs to the character of a public accuser?

Any such natural anticipations will be falsified; for if there be any one portion of the Hebrew Scriptures that peculiarly breathes a tender and plaintive spirit, it is the prophecy of Jeremiah. In reading it we see and hear the injured man of grief bewailing the miseries of his country, as well as his own misfortunes. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people![25] This is not the mood of the murky fanatic, who seeks to avenge the slights he has personally received from his countrymen, by exulting over public calamities. At the moment when murderously set upon by the men of his

[25] Jer. ix. i.

native town, the prophet passionately appeals to the divine protection,[26] and receives a message of wrath for his persecutors; but plainly he is not to be deemed vindictive in so doing, until the reality of his commission has been disproved. No native asperity of temper made the work of threatening agreeable to him. Witness his exclamation—"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention, to the whole earth!"[27] That his disposition was timid and mistrustful, much more than pugnacious, is evident; and, as is quite natural to such a temper, when encircled by formidable adversaries, he eagerly implores aid from heaven, whence alone he could hope for deliverance. But it is otherwise with the fanatic, who, in moments of excitement and danger, almost always shews the greater daring; nor will he even affect to say—"I have not desired the woeful day—O Lord thou knowest:—that which came out of my lips was right before thee.—Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil."[28] There are no characteristic distinctions to be relied upon at all among the passions, if we may not safely discriminate between the vehement strivings of an oppressed and tender spirit, and the virulent moodiness of the religious misanthrope.—The one bewails its own misfortunes as thus—"Wherefore came I forth of the womb to see

[26] Jer. xi. 20. [27] Jer. xv. 10. [28] Jer. xvii. 16.

labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame:"[29]—the other ruminates revenge, and cheers himself in the prospect of it.

There is found a courage, the fruit of virtue, in instances where the native courage of temperament is quite wanting. A firmness of the former sort was displayed by the prophet when at length, after many menaces from the rulers, he was arraigned as a traitor, and stood in immediate peril of death.[30] The constancy he displays on this occasion brings together meekness and resolution in genuine combination.—"As for me, behold I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you, to speak all these words in your ears."

But if we wanted a searching test, by means of which to determine the question of a man's temper, we might well find it in such a particular as this — namely, that while a self-commissioned and fanatical reprover holds back whatever might seem emollient or consolatory, and is really unable to strike any chord that is not harsh — the true messenger of heaven, on the contrary, shews whence he has received his

[29] Jer. xx. 18. [30] Jer. xxvi. 10.

instructions by frequently reverting (and with a natural ease) to bright hopes and mild persuasives. Now this characteristic especially belongs to Jeremiah. The instances are very numerous in which, even with the heaviest denunciations on his lips, he mingles the most cheering predictions, and the tenderest advices. "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel, for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity. And Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid."—"And out of (his ruined palaces) shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry."[31]

To announce wrath, which makes the sad *burden* of the true servant of the Lord, is the spontaneous task of the genuine fanatic; and because it is the task he has chosen, he refuses to take up any other theme. On this principle we do not hesitate to conclude that the Jewish prophets, though from age to age the messengers of divine displeasure, were incited by no malignant impulse: and the criterion is, that not one of them, even the most lugubrious, fails to brighten his scroll of woe with frequent words of mercy, and many sparkles of distant hope.

Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, and his predecessors, opens his ministry with language of disparagement towards the people to whom he is sent:—

[31] Jer. xlvi. 27, 28.

it was "a rebellious nation;—they and their fathers;—impudent children, and stiff-hearted;—they are a rebellious house."[32] Before this contumacious people was the prophet enjoined to spread "a roll of a book, written within and without with lamentations, and mourning, and woe." But if such be the pervading colour of Ezekiel's prophecy, as of others, this, like others, recommends itself as indeed a divine message, by its firm and very copious assertion of the great principles of virtue and piety. The prophet's forehead was "made as adamant, and harder than flint," to oppose the impudent rebellion of the people; but it was still "to warn the wicked to turn from his wickedness, and live." And we find too here, the same frequent admixture of gracious promises, and bright anticipations, with heavier matters. "I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered; and I will give you the land of Israel. And I will give you one heart; and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh, that ye may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people; and I will be their God."[33] This is encouragement without flattery; and hope, bursting through the black clouds of divine indignation.

[32] Ezek. ii. 3, 4, 10. [33] Ezek. xi. 16—20. and xxxvi. 20, to the end.

We find in Ezekiel[34] significant allusions to the existence, in his time, of sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy—vices that distinguish the mature age of a national religion; but yet there are no indications of the rise of that peculiar temper which, a few centuries later, became characteristic of the race. Nor indeed does any evidence present itself which might so be understood, until some time after the closing of the sacred canon. Had the spirit of fanaticism actually come abroad among the Jewish people in the age we are now speaking of, some indirect proof of the fact would infallibly have made itself apparent in those various writings that contain, or refer to the national sentiments, during, and after the captivity.—It was in Babylon, vexed, afflicted, humiliated, and yet conscious of a dignity far superior to what could be boasted by the lordly oppressor, that the Jew would naturally (if it had indeed become his mood) have given vent to the rankling pride of his bosom. Or it was while toiling, sword in hand, amid the ruins of the holy city — beset by jealous foes, scorned, dependant for protection upon an idolatrous government, and now thoroughly disenchanted of the ancient polytheistic propensity — it was then, and under circumstances of such extraordinary excitement, that the sons of Abraham — friend of God, might be expected to swell and pant with the gloomy and vindictive

[34] Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

arrogance of spiritual conceit. Yet we do not find that such was the fact. The strong corrective influence of the sacred writings, as well as of the extant prophetic function, held, it seems, the fanatical tendency effectually in check.

Fairly considered, in this specific point of view, the solemn confession of national disgraces and delinquencies, uttered by DANIEL, while the heavy foot of the Median king was yet on the neck of the people, ought to be taken as presumptive evidence that no rancorous national fanaticism — the usual product of grievous sufferings in minds conscious of religious nobility, had *then* sprung up, nor belonged to the Jew of the Captivity. Proof of the same kind, in part negative, in part positive, may be drawn from the manner and spirit of the prophets who closed the sacred canon. HAGGAI, for example, reproves, humiliates, and encourages the people; but neither does he himself excite, nor does he even allude to the existence of that peculiar temper, the origin of which we are in quest of: the virulence of national religious malignancy is not as yet discoverable. ZECHARIAH is consolatory, and labours to exhilarate the people; nevertheless he sternly insists on the great matters of justice and mercy. — "Execute true judgment," says he, "and shew mercy and compassions, every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger

nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."[35] This prophet then, we conclude, was no fanatic; for it is the special characteristic of such to set light by the simple truths of morality, while religious pretensions are blown up, and held on high. Nor does it appear as if the Jews of his time were fanatical; for although grievous faults of almost all kinds, are charged upon them, no allusion whatever is made, such as suggests the belief that this species of extravagance had then shewed itself.

Ezra and Nehemiah—priest and prince, stand on the page of history as noble examples of religious and national constancy, and of zeal for an institute, without perceptible taint of fanatical virulence. Their conduct and expressions are quite becoming to men who, being themselves accountable to a very jealous foreign power, and spitefully watched and hemmed in by the lawless hordes that ravaged the country, had to discharge the difficult part of restoring a long desolated land, of reinstating a fallen polity, and of correcting inveterate abuses. So far as we may safely gather indirect evidence from materials so brief and scanty, these two Chiefs might, if brought into comparison with any men who have been placed in similar circumstances, challenge high praise for patriotism, courage, and

[35] Zech. vii. 9, 10. viii. 16, 17.

moderation. Ezra and Nehemiah, we say, would have been heroes in the world's esteem—if they had not been BIBLE heroes. We should not neglect to take into our account the copious and eloquent historical confession, uttered in face of the assembled people by their leaders, after a public reading of the Law.[36] The introductory phrase is especially pertinent to our subject.—"And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers" (not haughtily to exult in their distinctions, nor to recount the early glories of their now fallen state, but) "to CONFESS THEIR SINS AND THE INIQUITIES OF THEIR FATHERS." No single excitement of fanaticism—no trace of it, is to be found in these closing memorials of canonical Jewish history.—Let the reader, if yet he doubts, search and see.

In the hasty, yet not incautious, review we have taken of the Hebrew Scriptures we have assumed nothing in their behalf; but have judged of them precisely as we should of the ancient literature of any other people. The issue of our scrutiny is a double conclusion, *first* that these writings do not encourage the spirit and feeling which the consciousness of religious privileges often engenders; but rather (and in a very remarkable manner) bear with all their stress against the rise of such emotions; and

[36] Neh. ix.

secondly, that while they afford abundant evidence (evidence given without reserve) of the prevalence of almost every immorality and disorder among the people, no indication is contained in them of the existence of that national fanaticism which, in the Roman age, raged in Judea so vehemently.

But there yet remains a point or two that must be noticed.—It has appeared that the arrogance of the Jewish people was not fomented, but repressed by Moses, and by the poets and prophets of succeeding times.—This however is a half only of the evidence that bears upon our argument, for it can be proved that a kindly sentiment *towards the human family at large* was pointedly enjoined by the same authorities. SEPARATION, it is true, was the fundamental principle of the Jewish polity;—but then it was separation on the ground *only* of those corruptions and enormities that prevailed in the surrounding countries. The sole object or intention of the national seclusion was to preserve in the world the prime elements of morals and religion. And to secure this intention, and to secure it in the actual condition of mankind at the time, an extraordinary line of policy, in particular cases, as well as unique institutions, both civil and religious, were indispensable. This chosen race of true worshippers must needs assume a front of defiance and of universal reprobation, planted, as it was, on the confines of mighty and splendid

idolatries. But then the reprobation had regard to *nothing* but the errors and the horrid vices of idolatry; consequently it was always true that, whoever among the nations, afar off or near, would renounce his delusions, and "cleave unto the God of Israel," was welcomed to the bosom of the state. Thus the light of genuine religion was diffused, as much as conserved, by the Mosaic institutions; and explicit provision was made for the unlimited extension of the benefits they conferred.

During the purer age of the Israelitish state it is manifest that the propagation of true religion was an object of the fond desires and prayers of the pious.—The people was instructed to connect their own prosperity with the welfare of the world. Yes—little as we may perhaps have heeded the fact, it is certain that expressions of the most expansive philanthropy echoed in the anthems of the Jewish temple worship! The passages challenge attention.—"God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us.—That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.—Let the people (the nations) praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let THE NATIONS BE GLAD AND SING FOR JOY; for thou shalt judge (preside over) the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and

God, EVEN OUR OWN GOD, shall bless us:—God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."[37] Noble utterance this, of piety and universal good-will! and how utterly unlike to that grudging temper which had taken firm hold of the Jewish mind in the time of its reprobation.

While fixing the eye upon the heights of the southern Syria in the age of Titus, who must not be amazed at the singular spectacle of a petty tribe, having its face sternly set against all nations, so as justly to be styled—"haters of mankind." And yet—marvellous are the revolutions of national character, this same region, and its sacred capital, a few centuries before, was the only spot on all the globe (as far as history informs us) where public worship ennobled itself by the language of universal good-will to man!

Never is it found that fanaticism indulges bright and unrestricted hopes in favour of the bulk of mankind.—Certainly it is not fanaticism that says—"All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name."[38] It is not fanaticism that, in the moment of national exultation, challenges all men to partake with itself its choicest honours. Yet such was actually the style of the songs that resounded, sabbath after sabbath, from the consecrated palaces of Zion. "O sing

[37] Psalm lxvii. [38] Psalm lxxxvi. 9.

unto the Lord a new song;—sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.—Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Bring an offering and COME INTO HIS COURTS. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Jerusalem) fear before him all the earth."[39] We ask now, Is it fair to say that the pristine religion of the Jews was dark, churlish, or misanthropic? "O praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise him, all ye people."[40] Such was that Judaism (as God made it) of which the Gospel gave only a new interpretation! But the degraded Jew of the era of the Gospel had so perverted the faith of his ancestors, that when Christianity came in at length to give effect to the devout desires of the ancient church, he gnawed his tongue in very spite.—Let us then attribute the later bad spirit strictly to the men in whom it is found; and do justice, as well to the primitive doctrine of this extraordinary people, as to the brighter system which sprung out of it.

Not only did several explicit enactments secure permission to aliens to take their part in the sacred Mosaic rites—even the most peculiar of them, but innumerable passages of the Pentateuch and of the prophets, assert, very solemnly,

[39] Psalm xcvi. [40] Psalm cxvii.

the rights of the *stranger*, and protect his welfare, along always with the widow and the fatherless.—"The STRANGER, the widow, and the fatherless," were to be cared for and cherished, as an indispensable condition of the Divine favour to the nation. "Take heed that you oppress not the *stranger*, for thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt." The Mosaic law, if actually *seclusive*, and if in one sense stern, was benign also, as well as just. In truth the Israelitish Law stands absolutely alone among the various documents of antiquity, as an efficient Protector of the feeble and destitute, against the strong—of the poor against the rich. Nothing, in the eye of this law, made men abominable — but vice:—it authenticated no sanctity apart from the practice of justice and mercy.—What more can we wish for or think of in a code that professes to come from Heaven?

The prophets as they rose, vigorously maintained the Mosaic provisions in favour of the alien. For example—"Let not the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak saying—The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people.—The sons of the stranger (i. e. all men without distinction, not of the Abrahamic race) that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold

of my covenant;—even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer FOR ALL PEOPLE."[41] The conversion of the Gentiles to the true religion is, as every reader of the Bible knows, a very frequent theme with the prophets; and when combined, as we find it, with pungent upbraidings of the chosen race, on account of their inveterate obduracy, must be held to constitute the strongest counteractive influence that can be imagined against spurious and repulsive national prejudices in matters of religion.

To what extent, during the lapse of many centuries, the Jewish institutions and Sacred Books actually diffused the blessings of true religion among the surrounding nations is a point not now to be ascertained. Yet evidence is not wanting in support of the supposition that the influence of the Hebrew polity and literature spread, in some directions, very far, so that the splendour of Truth which fell in a full beam upon Zion, did in fact radiate on all sides, and was, "as a light to lighten the Gentiles," even to the ends of the earth. Without assuming to know more than history enables us to speak of, we may safely conjecture that the successive

[41] Isai. lvi. 3, 6, 7.

captivities of the two portions of the Hebrew race subserved this benignant intention, and operated to scatter the elements of virtue and piety over most parts of the eastern world. In like manner as Christianity was at first diffused by means of persecution, so, probably, had Judaism been diffused, again and again, by the conquest and desolation of its native soil. And it is to be noted that those who thus went forth —the compulsory missionaries of pure theology, left the land of their fathers before the age when the proud and churlish temper which afterwards made their name odious in all the world, had sprung up.[42]

But we have, in a former Section, affirmed, that fanaticism has its rise either in a gloomy conception of the Divine Nature, or in a belief which attributes the immediate and sovereign control of human affairs to malign invisible powers. A main consideration then, when the tendency of the Hebrew Scriptures becomes matter of inquiry, is the representation they

[42] A more than curious subject of inquiry presents itself in this direction. A multitude of intimations, scattered over the remains of ancient literature, supports the belief that the Hebrew theology had a very extensive influence throughout the eastern world—an influence reflected faintly upon Greece, in furnishing to mankind the elements of piety. The two books of Josephus against Apion are available as aids in such an inquiry; and we might turn also with great advantage to the early Christian writers, especially those named in a preceding note (p. 365), who supply very many clews for extending it still further. The results of such an investigation would be consolatory on more grounds than one. The beneficence of Heaven is broader than we often suppose.

make (taken in mass) of the character of Jehovah. In addition to what has already been said on this point some special circumstances should be adverted to.

We naturally read the Old Testament in the light of the New. Or, in reading the Old, we carry with us those brighter or more refined elements of Theology to which the Gospel has given prominence; and then we measure the immature, or undeveloped principles of the precursive dispensation by the standard of the later. Yet a different mode of procedure is demanded by historic justice; — for plainly we ought to form our conceptions of the religious system given to the descendants of Abraham, by paying attention to the position in which it stood in relation to the sentiments and practices of the nations around it, during the ages of its destined continuance.—Judaism, such as we find it in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, is not so properly thought of as a beam of light from heaven, shining on a certain spot of earth; as an energy of resistance, or a defensive power, maintaining, from age to age, a difficult position, against mighty assailants on all sides. Before we can fairly say what was Judaism—we must know—to what it was opposed—and what were the errors it kept at bay.

Is it then true that these ancient books present a stern and formidable front? Is the Divine Majesty, as spoken of by the Seers of

Israel, girt about with thick clouds of the sky, and do thunderbolts play around the footstool of his throne? Yes; but what were those idolatrous delusions of which this same awful revelation made itself the antagonist? Nothing less horrible than the murderous superstitions of the Tyrians, Sidonians, Moabites, Ammonians, Egyptians, Philistines, Babylonians. These were the adversaries of Jehovah, and it was therefore that "a fiery tempest went before Him." The terrors that made Sinai tremble were conservative means—were defensive weapons—were necessary and benign instruments, employed to expel from the rude minds of an infant nation, the cruel and foul belief and worship of Moloch, of Dagon, of Baal, of Thammuz. The sternness of Jehovah should then be thought of as we regard the compassionate vigour of a Parent, who strives, at all costs, to rescue his children from some cruel and seductive thraldom.

Mere justice, such as the principles of historic inquiry demand, not to speak of religious considerations, requires that we should read the Old Testament under this recollection, and as often as we meet with that which, to our acquired notions, seems rigorous, or vindictive, we are bound to bear in mind the sanguinary temper, and the detestable usages from which this same rigour was to preserve the tribes of Israel. The lapse of four and thirty centuries

permits us now to descry only the dim forms of the idolatry that had gained its acmé of cruelty among the nations of Canaan, and the surrounding countries, when Moses led his people into the Arabian deserts. But the more industriously we pursue the faint indications of antiquity, the more clearly do we discern the reason and fitness and necessity of what, in the Jewish history alarms our modern notions of the Divine Nature.

And yet let it be distinctly understood what the real character of that severity was which distinguishes the ancient Jewish theology? Jehovah, was He terrible? Yes, but to whom?—To NONE but the corrupt, the unjust, the rapacious, the impure. Toward the faithful and the obedient, toward the penitent and the upright, He was "full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, ready to forgive;—a God pardoning iniquity, and passing by the transgression of his heritage." The memory of every one conversant with the Scriptures is fraught with passages of similar import; and it might even be affirmed that, although, in the New Testament, the way of access to the Divine favour is set open in a manner of which the Old Testament knows little, nevertheless, if we are in quest of abstract affirmations of the placability and tenderness of God toward man, or if we want affecting instances of Divine condescension, we shall find such passages in greater

abundance in the Old Testament than in the New.—Moreover (and this fact should never be forgotten) a great and leading purpose of the ancient dispensation was to protect the human mind from the slavish terror, so natural to it, of those SUBORDINATE MALIGNANT POWERS, whose tyrannous rage could be propitiated only by horrible rites. In this sense, emphatically, Moses and the Prophets struck at the root of fanaticism, by instating the Holy and Supreme Benevolence in the heart of man, as the ONLY object of dread, and by dislodging from their seats the host of ferocious invisible divinities.

We dare then conclude, upon impartial and attentive consideration of the evidence, *first* that the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures is not of fanatical tendency; and then that the writers of those books were not men of exaggerated and malign tempers.

In reaching this conclusion we have assumed nothing peculiar in behalf of the Hebrew Scriptures; but have looked at them as we should at any other ancient writings, and have endeavoured to estimate their quality and influence on the ordinary principles of human nature. But the result of such an examination must be—as we undoubtedly believe, to establish the divine original of these books. This point secured, and it is secured too on every separate line of argument that is applicable to the

subject, and then the fact — That the Jewish Lawgiver, and the prophets, and the poets of Israel were men immediately commissioned and empowered by God, affords a proper solution of every apparent difficulty, arising either from the spirit and complexion of particular passages, or from the course of conduct enjoined in special instances.

What can be more manifest than the propriety of this mode of treating such difficulties? For one man to accost another as the enemy of God—or to adjudge him to perdition, or to strike him to the earth, is indeed an outrage such as bespeaks in the assailant the most dire fanaticism, or absolute insanity. But the case is altogether altered if this same denunciator, or executioner of the wrath of Heaven is able to shew Heaven's credentials actually in his hand. He whom God sends, speaks the words of God—delivers a trust which he has no liberty to evade, and performs a part that can have no immorality, because it proceeds from the Source of Law. This rule applies, without an exception, to all those instances, so often and so idly produced, in which the question hinges exclusively upon the fact of a divine injunction given to the speaker or the agent. If the prophet, or the chief were indeed inspired, then the words he utters or the deeds he performs are not to be accounted his; and though arrogant or vindictive, if human only, are fitting and just—if

divine. Concede the divinity of the Scriptures, and then every such objection is merged, or becomes ineffably futile. Deny their divinity, and then the argument is altogether unimportant.

SECTION X.

THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE NOT FANATICAL.

(THE NEW TESTAMENT.)

To entertain, even hypothetically, an argument such as the one before us, may seem not merely superfluous, but improper. What, it may be asked, has the world seen comparable to Christianity for the benignity of its maxims and spirit? Where are we to find charity, where meekness, where philanthropy, if not in the Gospels?—To inquire then, as if the issue were doubtful, whether this religion be rancorous and fanatical, might appear not more irreverent than preposterous.

Be it so, and yet we must advance in our course without fear. To a timid objector it is enough to reply that, as in fact the most inordinate species of fanaticism have, in different eras, sprung out of the profession of Christianity, and have in the most intimate manner blended

themselves with its principles, there is a very urgent necessity, if we would deal fairly with our subject, for a strict search into the authentic documents of our faith, with this specific view; and the issue of such an inquiry, as we are persuaded, can be nothing else but to prove—*first*, That these writings contain no malign excitements; and *secondly*, That the writers were personally exempt from every kind of spurious and rancorous sentiment. The question having already been briefly considered on general grounds, (pp. 380—386) we have now only to pass (with as much celerity as the argument admits) through the several canonical books, noting as it arises, whatever fairly bears upon the question.

We are met, on the very first page of the evangelic history, by a choir of supernal beings, announcing the Saviour's birth, which is declared to bring "peace on earth, and GOOD-WILL to men," as well as "glory to God." Has this angelic profession then been borne out, or contradicted by facts?—A perplexing question, if we are resolved to impute to systems, or persons, the entire mischief that has chanced to stand connected, ever so remotely, with them; but by no means perplexing, if we mean to look equitably at the intrinsic qualities of a system, and to the personal dispositions and conduct of the men who have yielded themselves the most

completely to its influence. On *this* ground it may confidently be affirmed that, as peace and philanthropy are the grand lesson of the Gospel, so have they been its actual fruits.

A circumstance that ought by no means to be passed over, is the sort of welcome given to the "holy child" on his first entrance upon his "Father's house"—the Jewish temple. There, the long desired "consolation of Israel" is affirmed to be "a Light to lighten the GENTILES," as well as the glory of the chosen people. Early check, this, to the then prevalent and fast ripening national arrogance and bigotry of the Abrahamic race! Although thus it had been long before "written in the prophets," no principle could more offend the prejudices of the times than this—That the Messiah, the King of Israel, should bless, rather than exterminate and vanquish, the uncircumcised families of the earth.

The ascetic habit and austere style of the Baptist, as we descry him amid the frowning solitudes of the Jordan, and see him with his feet washed by its dark waters, seem to promise something not in harmony with those cheering precursive notes of mercy to mankind we had lately listened to from heaven. And so in fact the preaching of John is found to be in "the spirit and power of Elijah"—a ministry of reproof —a piercing call to repentance; and especially a sharp rebuke of national sanctimoniousness and corruption:—or to say all in a word, the preach-

ing of John was an energetic corrective of the hypocrisy and fanatical presumption of his countrymen. "Bring forth," he cries, "fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father;' for I say to you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham:"—Yes, although the Jewish race, with all its proud pretensions were swept from the face of the earth, Abraham should not want a spiritual progeny, for the Divine power would (as actually it did) instate the Gentiles in the privileges of the ancient church. The Baptist then, although, as we catch a distant glimpse of him, while eagerly listened to by a promiscuous crowd, he may have the air of a virulent declaimer, is not such in fact; for if we will but draw near, and give attention to his discourse, we find him vigorously assailing the national arrogance, and we hear him humbling his hearers in their own esteem, by insisting on those capital articles of morality which had dropt out of their scheme of punctilious and farcical piety.—Moreover he fails not to renounce for himself the honours which the people would have paid him:—but this surely bespeaks him a genuine prophet of the Lord, and proves that he was no aspiring sectarist.

In the remarkable narrative of the temptation the principal circumstance (bearing on our question) is an assertion, by our Lord, of the claim

of God to human reverence, in contradiction of the impious homage which the Rebel Spirit falsely challenged to himself, as master of the world. The rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan," bore against all forms of polytheistic superstition, the essence of which, under whatever guise, is a servile deference paid to malevolent invisible power. And this comprehensive condemnation of the worst of all errors was followed up, throughout the course of our Lord's ministry, by his exercising a rigorous control over the infernal legions:—The malignant power was no longer to usurp the regards of mankind; for a stronger arm than his had despoiled him of the "armour wherein he trusted;" and henceforward the Supreme Benevolence alone was to be looked to by man, as the object of hope and fear. The tendency of the New Testament is altogether to emancipate the human mind from its ancient thraldom to the invisible tyrants; and it does this, not by affirming the non-existence of such beings, but by exposing their guile, and by declaring their enchainment, under the hand of the Omnipotent Son of God.—In thus removing the grounds of superstition, Christianity, wherever it takes effect, dries up the source of fanaticism, the virulence of which is drawn from the belief of a malevolent administration of human affairs. [1]

[1] The subject of diabolical agency has been once and again alluded to, as connected with fanatical sentiments. Had it been possible to

Every form of religious rancour is *implicitly* reproved in the announcement which the Divine Deliverer makes, at an early stage of his public ministry, of the purpose of God toward mankind;—"The Father hath so LOVED THE WORLD as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For the Father sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world might be saved through him."—And again, when he declares that—"The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Whether it be the self-tormenting rigour of the ascetic, or the deadly zeal of the Inquisitor, or the martial rage of the Moslem conqueror, or the crabbed bigotry of the modern dogmatist; each is utterly condemned, and the specious pretexts of each are torn away, by this first axiom of Christianity—That the Gospel is at once the expression, and the means of the DIVINE BENEVOLENCE TOWARD MANKIND AT LARGE. Any zeal, therefore, which is not benign, is not a godly or Christian zeal; rather, we should deem it an infernal impulse that drives on those who, under pretence of religion, torture themselves, or others, or indulge sentiments of contempt and hatred toward mankind in the mass, or toward particular bodies of men:—if this be our spirit,

bring the question within narrow limits the author would have given it a prominent place in the present volume. He proposes to treat it more distinctly in his projected work on Superstition.

it is not the spirit of Jesus;—for he was "the Saviour of all men." It is Satan—not Christ, who is the author of cruelties, and the patron and upholder of sects.

The broadest and the firmest foundation being thus laid in the Gospel for philanthropy (nothing more broad can be imagined) those condemnatory announcements which bear out the message of mercy are wholly deprived of the pernicious force that otherwise might have belonged to them. Nothing can destroy men, we learn, but their final contempt of the Divine forbearance. All men therefore are to be regarded as salvable; and all are, in a genuine sense, the objects of the same Benevolence which has rescued ourselves from perdition. To give effect to this divine benevolence (so far as human agency may extend) is the part that belongs to Christians; nor can any motive be authentic that will not freely play in concert with the unrestricted zeal of compassion.

Our Lord in his discourse with the Samaritan woman throws open the gate of religious privilege to all nations;—thus shutting out the Jewish arrogance, and at the same time securing the special authority of truth, against a vague and spurious candour. "Ye (Samaritans) know not what ye worship;—for salvation is of the Jews."—It is they who are the keepers of the recorded will of Heaven; it is from among them that shall spring up the new and universal reli-

gion. Nevertheless this new religion, although of Jewish birth, is not to be the property of the worshippers at Jerusalem only; but shall comprehend those of every country who "worship the Father in spirit and truth."—The Gospel advances always on a precise line, nor must it ever be turned from the prescribed track.—Yet is this line "gone forth into all the world," and like the equatorial, must girt the globe.

The motives of Christianity, like the powers of nature, produce their genuine fruits only in combination: whoever severs, perverts them. Thus when it was said to the first promulgators of the Gospel, just about to "go forth as sheep among wolves"—"Happy are ye when men speak evil of you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake," this same self-congratulation which it was lawful to admit under injurious treatment, might readily subside into a malign habit within the bosom of the oppressed sectarist, if it were not balanced by that other exhortation, soon subjoined, and so emphatically given—"Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."—The fanatic divides these counteractive elements of feeling.—He blesses himself in the presumption of Divine favour, and if he does not loudly curse his persecutor, mutters an anticipation of the wrath that is to fall upon "the enemies of

God."—To love his enemy, and heartily to wish him well, is a point of virtue he scarcely pretends to. The rule of Divine forgiveness brings these very same motives into close contact. Sternly is it declared that he who grants no pardon to others, shall receive none for himself. The vindictive religionist avoids the application of the rule to his own case, only by renouncing the supposition of personal guilt:—he who has no sin, needs not shew indulgence. And thus in fact we find an egregious conceit of the favour of God towards himself, to be always the germ of the rancorous sentiments of the bigot.

If at any time our Lord—"meek and lowly" as he was, assumed the tones of indignant reproof, we find it on those occasions precisely when the sanctimonious and fanatical Scribe, Pharisee, and Lawyer, stood before him;—not when surrounded by the publicans and sinners of the people. Never before had haughty and hollow religionism received so severe a reprimand as that reported by the Evangelist,[2] in which not merely is the veil rent from the face of hypocrisy; but the culprit's false heart is laid open, and the double-edged knife pierces to the "dividing asunder of the joints and marrow;"—nay, the very "thoughts and intents of the soul" are exposed to the gaze of all. Neither is the hypocrite or the fanatic spared, although found among the chosen followers of the Lord.—

[2] Matt. xxiii.

"Have not I chosen you twelve," said the Lord; "and one of you is a devil?" And how did he check the intemperate zeal of those of them who would have called down fire from heaven to avenge the inhospitality of certain Samaritans:—"Ye know not what spirit ye are of." And again, as if to shut out on every side a false temper in matters of religion, he defended the harmless trespass of his followers in the corn field, against the punctilious objection of the Pharisees.—"If ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the innocent." Is not this answer the very antithesis of fanaticism? does it not reach the core of spiritual acerbity?

So far as the public ministry of Christ may be termed criminative and severe, the object of it was that special disposition whence fanaticism takes its rise, namely—an affected zeal for the purity of religion, shewing itself in a conceit of the Divine favour toward the zealot himself, and an envious contempt of the mass of mankind. These were in fact the characteristic vices of the time, and it was against these, and these only, that the Divine Teacher directed the vehemence of his reprehension. We say then that if a spurious and malign zeal is found to be the national fault of the Jewish people, at the era of Christianity, the teaching of Christ, far from fomenting that pernicious temper, in

the most bold and unsparing manner condemned it.

Yet we should look to those special occasions on which the temper of a Teacher, or the tendency of a system makes itself apparent in some incidental and indirect manner. Now we actually find an instance of this sort, and a very signal one, when the seventy delegates, after having borne their message through the towns of Jewry, returned to their Master with joy, saying—"Lord, even the dæmons are subject unto us through thy name!" Natural exultation! and yet the feeling whence it sprang was of a dangerous kind; or at least was one that urgently demands to be counterpoised by motives of quite another order. How readily does the human imagination kindle at the thought of a near contact with Invisible Powers!—and if moreover these Powers are thought of as malevolent, the darkest and most terrible passions rush in to lend their force to the conceptions of evil. Should it happen too, at the same time, that an open triumph has been had over such beings, who long had made sport of human frailty, the gloomy excitement of the soul reaches its utmost point:—or it may do so. Were any such emotions actually rife in the bosoms of his followers—and we must not affirm it to be impossible, our Lord did by no means check the mischief in the manner which the frigid sceptic would approve;—he did not avail himself of

that fair occasion for rooting out of the minds of his disciples the belief altogether of malignant and hostile invisible power; — far from it — he solemnly authenticates that belief when he says—"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven:" — and again — "I give you authority over all the power of THE ENEMY." But the sentiments of his followers were not to be left to rest at this point;—their feelings were to be carried forward, as all genuine religious emotions should, into the bright region of hope, humility, and pious gratitude.—"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." To complete the transition from a less benign sentiment, to one more congenial with the spirit of the Gospel, Jesus uttered aloud a thanksgiving which, by a manifest implication, conveyed a very humiliating lesson to the heart of the hearers. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto *babes!*" If among the seventy there was found a proud, an ambitious, or a rancorous spirit, what rebuke could it have received more pointed than the one involved in the terms of this address to heaven? Fanaticism can take no hold of the human mind until that child-like temper which Christ here affirms and supposes to be characteristic of his disciples has been thrown off.

Presenting itself as it does in the same connexion, we ought to notice that significant—nay, severe reproof of Jewish arrogance which the parable of the compassionate Samaritan conveys.—What irony more caustic than that of bringing upon the scene the Priest and Levite, of whom we catch a glimpse as they move off, wrapped in sacerdotal scrupulosity and pride; while a Samaritan (hated name) comes up to furnish the lesson of piety and mercy! We ought distinctly to conceive of the virulence of national feelings at the time, if we would understand the cutting force of this apologue. The parable of the Prodigal, in like manner, obliquely, but not obscurely assails the bad and grudging temper of the Jewish people, and holds forth, in figure, the very line of conduct which the zealots of that nation actually pursued when afterwards they saw "Sinners of the Gentiles" coming to the arms of Divine mercy, and numbered with the family of God. These incidental instances are pertinent to our subject, inasmuch as they shew the steady purpose of our Lord to place his doctrine and his system of morals in direct opposition to the existing sentiments of his countrymen.—He mortified every fond prejudice, as well as reproved every scandal of the times.

The difficult point of practical wisdom in the conduct of a public instructor is always the management of those articles of faith that wear an adverse aspect one to the other. This is the

stumbling stone of the presumptuous reasoner :—this the occasion of offence to the feeble ;—this the ordeal of discretion. Three or four such instances might be named; but they are all by implication contained in the two main principles — each fully and freely affirmed in the Christian system—namely, The Divine Benevolence—absolute as it is, and the Divine Justice, involving tremendous consequences to the human race. It is here that the iron-sinewed theologue, with his paper demonstrations, has outraged at once the Divine Character, and every natural sentiment of equity and goodness; it is here that the murky fanatic shews his home to be the world of evil; and it is here, on the other side, that those have stumbled and fallen who scruple not to make the Divine testimony nugatory whenever it offends them.

How different was the style of the Divine Teacher in this instance, and in giving attention for a moment to his method, if we do no more, we shall catch a note or two of that celestial harmony which breathed in every word he spoke, and proclaimed him to be "from above."

The then extant belief of the Jewish people (or the greater part of them) on the subject of future punishment,[3] our Lord did not mitigate;

[3] A knowledge of the opinions and modes of speaking prevalent among the Jews is necessary to a correct understanding of our Lord's language on this serious subject. Philo especially should be searched for this purpose. The doctrine he holds is of a very decisive character —*ὅτι οἶμαι ἡ ἀσέβεια κακόν ἐστιν ἀτελεύτητον, ἐξαπτόμενον, καὶ μηδέπω σβεσθῆναι δυνάμενον* .... *De Profugis.*

nor did he leave it where he found it; but affirmed it anew, made it an inseparable part of his religion, and gave it his sanction in terms as distinct and irrefragable as language affords. Compared with Moses or with the Prophets, or with other Religious Institutors, Christ might in a sense be called the Herald of Wrath. Not one of his ministers (so far as appears) came up to their Master in the fulness or the frequency of his announcement of the doom of the impenitent. They, though with firmness, yet with modesty and fear, assert the terrors of Divine Justice; but he speaks like one whose eye, piercing the thin veil of the material world, continually gazed upon the mysteries of the unseen. The apostles spoke in the confidence of faith; Christ with the vivacity of immediate knowledge.

And yet, who like Jesus has manifested the glory of the Father, whose glory is love? By what means then did he bear in his hands, together, these antagonist elements of religion? Certainly it was not by labouring to extenuate at one time what he had too boldly affirmed at another. Never did he insinuate, or throw out as by chance, mitigations which the sceptic might catch up, and expand at his pleasure. Neither did he enter at any time upon exculpatory reasons in behalf of the divine administration of human affairs; nor open the way to abstruse speculation, such as should establish the eternal

consistencies of goodness and severity. Not a syllable did he furnish as text to the learned disquisitions that have entertained the schools.—In a word, our Lord made no *direct provision* against those abuses or ill consequences that might flow from his doctrine.

Nevertheless these ill consequences are in fact so counteracted, that Christianity, even by the admission of its enemies, taken as a whole, and taken as its Author left it, is bright and benign. The means by which the two elements of wrath and love are balanced, so far as they may be traced, bespeak the same wisdom that adjusts and balances the antagonist powers of nature. The first and most obvious counteractive means we have already had occasion (page 168—170) to speak of—namely, the invariable and intelligible annexation of the threatened punishment to vicious acts, and to an impious life, so that the doctrine bears always directly upon the conscience, and gives its aid to virtue.

In the next place, our Lord, without ever attempting, on abstract ground to harmonize the divine attributes, exhibited the glory, beauty, and sweetness of the PATERNAL Creator, and Preserver, and Sovereign, in a manner never before thought of, and which can never be steadily contemplated by any human mind without imparting sentiments that effectually exclude morose or fanatical emotions. This is a countervailing provision, not formal indeed, but

infallible, and of irresistible force. The providence of God, both universal and particular, comprehensive and minute, the unremitted care of life, the regard to the wants, and fears, and hopes, and even comfort of all creatures, the constant attention to prayer, the special regard to the poor, the feeble, and the lowly, and the Divine forbearance toward the disobedient, — all these benign elements of theology form the prominent characteristics of the teaching of Christ.

But how can we reconcile such exhibitions of tenderness and love with the actual facts, announced by the same Teacher, of the ruin and miseries of man? The teacher himself, confiding in the real, though occult consistency of what he declares, and not anxious for consequences, throws out the two great principles, and leaves them to work as they may, within the human bosom. With that serenity which befits the Author of Christianity, as Author of all things, and Sovereign of the Universe, he puts in play each proper impulse of the moral economy.— Purblind Philosophy may call them incompatible.—Nature and Truth shall pronounce them one.

We have yet to advance a step further.—So contracted and exclusive in its modes of feeling is the human mind, that if we converse much and long with terrible or afflictive conceptions, and heartily surrender ourselves to the impression

of certain appalling facts, it is not easy to avoid becoming sullenly indifferent to the present sufferings of mankind; as if it were of little moment what those are enduring in the present life, who must endure worse in the next. Not such were the sentiments of the Saviour of the world;—no insensibility of this kind affected his human sympathies: He thought lightly of no pain or want that attaches to mortality: infirmity, or anguish, or hunger, he cared for, and relieved.—"He bare our infirmities, and himself took our sicknesses." The benevolence of the Lord Jesus was like the radiance of the sun, which, while spreading itself over the broad fields of the universe, even to the utmost verge of nature, pervades also the most obscure recesses, penetrates every depth, and brings home warmth and joy to the meanest orders of the sentient world.

Come to what conclusion we may, or let us be never so much perplexed in our fruitless endeavours to reach any conclusion that may fully reconcile opposing truths, the fact stands before us—a fact full of instruction, that He whose doctrine inspires us with extreme alarm on account of the great mass of our fellow men, nevertheless, when in the desert he looked upon the multitudes that had left their homes to follow him, "had compassion upon them," and would by no means leave them to suffer even a transient hunger and fatigue. The same spirit

pervades every action; he healed—"as many as were brought unto him," he rejected none;—he made no conditions; but dispensed good with a royal facility, as well as with sensitive tenderness. Nor did the momentous importance of his public work alienate him from the suavities of personal friendship. Still we find no theologic explication of the apparent contrariety of Love and Justice; but instead of it, are presented with a living exemplar of the harmony of the two.

Another striking characteristic of our Lord's sentiments, as exhibited in his mode of teaching, bears directly upon our subject.—This is the style and materials of his tropes and apologues. If the imagination be susceptible of vivid impressions, it is scarcely possible to entertain frequently conceptions of terror without losing the taste or the faculty that finds recreation among the gay beauties and simple charms of nature. Fruits and flowers, bright skies and rustic occupations, retain no hold of the spirit that often takes its flight through the abyss of horrors. To stoop and to gather illustrations, and to do so by habit, from the garden and the field, and from the humble labours of domestic life, has never been the manner of those who have borne heavy tidings to their fellow men — even when their motive has been sincere and benevolent; much less of the ireful reformer, the glance of whose eye seems to

scathe whatever dares to look green and happy.

Yet it was not so with Jesus. When we bear in mind the ordinary alliance of the moral sentiments with the imagination, and think how naturally subjects of a vast and afflictive order cloud the mind, and impart to it an inflexible rigour, we must contemplate with amazement, in our Lord's discourses and parables, the junction of elements seemingly the most incongruous. —What more appalling—what, if indeed we follow it to its meaning, what more distracting to the heart, than the affirmations which often conclude a series of parables that has brought together the smiling beauties of the visible creation, and the gentle familiar suavities of common life! Considered as literature merely, our Lord's discourses, as well public as private, take their place, not along with the vehement and impassioned harangues of orators; but with the mildest and most attractive class of pastoral and dramatic compositions. Yet what were the truths that stretched a dark and deep foundation beneath this fair superstructure of heavenly wisdom? — truths which, when vividly perceived by other men, have absorbed the soul, and given a sombre colour to every sentiment. Nowhere, except in the discourses recorded by the Evangelists, do we hear such mingled tones of terror and sweetness issuing from the same lips. The apostles, though raised above

the common level by the Spirit that dwelt in them, yet never reached, nor even approached, the elevation of their Master. Their style was human; and the weighty matters of their message to mankind so pressed upon their hearts that they became, in some measure, abstracted from the smaller interests of life, and insensible to the graces of nature. Their language, though figurative, is always urgent and grave, and befitting men whose task is felt by themselves to surpass their powers.

The graceful serenity and happy ease of our Lord's mode of teaching should command our profound attention, *first* as an indirect yet irresistible evidence (we should say *manifestation*) of his divinity, and of his absolute superiority to all other teachers; and *secondly*, as involving a proof, far better than any metaphysic demonstration could be, of the interior consistency of the benignity and justice of God. The more we meditate upon this subject the more shall we be convinced that it furnishes all we ought anxiously to wish for in the way of explication of the Divine attributes. He in whom were concentrated these very attributes — He whose purity was the purity of God, and whose compassion was the compassion of God, is heard to utter, in one and the same breath, the language of inflexible Justice and of absolute Love. Holiness and benevolence then are one; and we should be content to

confide implicitly in such a proof that they are so.

But we must now turn from the Master to his Disciples.

There may fairly be room to ask whether, after their Master had left them, and when they became the objects of the fury of their countrymen, and entered fresh upon a field of extraordinary excitements, the first disciples maintained meekness and charity of temper; or yielded to those emotions which similar circumstances have too often awakened. A question like this must be determined, not by the formal testimony of the parties in their own cause; but by inferences drawn from incidental allusions, or casual expressions. And is it credible that a company of men really exorbitant in their modes of thinking, and gloomy or malign in their tempers, should hand down to posterity a collection of memoirs and letters, such as shall convey no indication of the passions that were working in their bosoms? This were indeed the greatest of miracles, and we reject, without scruple, the supposition that it might be true.

As in the eye of irreligious men any degree of feeling in matters of religion is enthusiasm, so must the same persons deem any sort of zeal in the propagation of it fanatical. If it be enthusiasm to pray, it is certainly fanaticism to travel from city to city, troubling men's minds by announcements of future judgment; and

how much more fanatical, to encounter stripes and imprisonments in such a course, or actually to meet a violent death, rather than abandon the enterprise of converting mankind to a system of opinions! If *now* it be enthusiastic for a man to account the service and worship of God the main business of his life, unquestionably the course of conduct pursued by the first propagators of the Gospel, as well as by all who have since trodden in their steps, was preposterous. But if the Gospel be indeed from Heaven, our estimation of men and things must obey another rule. In this case it must be granted, that whatever might be the immediate consequences of the agitations they excited, and even although the public tranquillity was much disturbed in all quarters of the Roman empire by their preaching, nevertheless the pertinacious zeal of the apostles was strictly reasonable, and their fortitude and courage in the best sense magnanimous. There still however remains a question which may be prosecuted, even after this general admission has been made, namely, whether the apostles and their companions, in fulfilling the extraordinary part assigned to them, at all forgot personal moderation, charity, and benevolence; or do we find them, when placed in circumstances of peculiar excitement, acrimonious, vindictive, ungovernable? In a word, is their language and conduct that of fanatics, or such only as well

became good and honest men, commissioned to establish in the world, at any cost to themselves, the great principles of piety?

The hour of trial for the temper of the disciples of Christ was when, after having got possession of the popular favour, it rested with themselves either to fan the kindling flame of national feeling, and turn it vindictively upon the rulers (a course which evidently these rulers apprehended as probable[4]) or to avail themselves of the attention they then commanded, for the purpose of enforcing the spiritual objects of their ministry. If the readiness of the Jewish rabble, at this period, to obey every violent impulse be considered, and it be recollected too, that the apostles were themselves men of the lower class, and destitute of motives of policy, and moreover, very lately, like their countrymen, filled with expectations of secular aggrandizement;—if we bear in mind that Peter, James, and John, the rustics of Galilee, were, only a few weeks before the day of Pentecost, dreaming of temporal dignities—palaces and regal splendour, we are then qualified to estimate fairly the language held by them when surrounded by the thousands of the people that thronged the precincts of the temple. Not only do we find no tampering with the national passions of

[4] "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Acts v. 28.

the multitude, but the tide of feeling was sent in upon every man's personal sense of guilt;—the most effectual of all means this, of assuaging tumultuous excitements. Nor were even the just feelings of indignation worked upon by the use of acrimonious terms. On the contrary, the most indulgent construction which the facts admitted was put upon the sanguinary act of those who had crucified "the Holy One —the Lord of Glory." "And now brethren," says Peter, "I wot that through ignorance ye did, as did also your rulers.—Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. — For God, having raised up his son Jesus, hath sent him TO BLESS YOU, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

Assuredly this is not the language either of demagogues, or of fanatics! Whoever would affirm it to be so must entertain strange notions of human nature, and be ignorant too of history. The demagogue never extenuates the conduct of the authorities he is aiming to overthrow;—the fanatic does not bless, but curse. The same simplicity of intention, reaching just to the point of firmness and fidelity, but not going beyond it, is conspicuous in Peter's behaviour before the rulers:—he adhered to his instructions—the instructions of heaven; yet neither defied his judges, nor railed upon them; but, appealing to their common sense, left

himself in their hands. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye."

The pattern of behaviour thus set by the apostles on the first occurrence of persecution, was adhered to in all those instances which come within the range of the canonical history. The story is ever the same;—on the one part, a furious intolerance and cruelty; on the other, firmness, simplicity, and patient endurance of wrong. Thus it was that the protomartyr shewed of whom he had learned the lesson of meekness, when dying under the hands of a ruffian mob, he exclaimed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"

In Luke's memoirs we soon lose sight of Peter and his companions, and must look to their epistles for evidence on the question whether, through a course of years, their spirits remained unhurt by persecutions and contempt. Was the patience of these preachers at length worn out; or did they become as they grew old, captious and imperious, within the church; and turbulent and morose without it? It is natural to turn first to the epistles of Peter, both on account of his official preeminence in the apostolic college, and because the impetuosity of temper which the evangelic narrative attributes to him, would make it probable that, if any of the twelve overstepped the line of meekness and moderation, he would be the one.

Whatever difference of spirit may present itself in comparing the evangelic history of Peter's early conduct with the writings that convey the sentiments of his matured mind, this alteration ought to be attributed to the gradual influence of the system of opinions he had embraced; and if we are asking, What was the tendency of that system? nothing can be more fair than to mark its operation upon a mind so peculiarly susceptible of strong excitements. Thus for example, if, notwithstanding the existence of certain formal precepts of a contrary aspect, the real operation of Christianity had been of a kind to cherish contumacious, ambitious, or virulent dispositions, nothing could have prevented the display of that result, after it had been ripened by the various occasions and trials of thirty years. Chief of the new sect, and distinguished among his colleagues by the delegation to his hands of certain awful powers, Peter, vehement and heady, would have become arrogant, jealous in the defence of his supremacy, and (like prelates of after ages) a strenuous asserter of apostolic authority. This we say, must infallibly have happened, human nature being the same in that age as in every other, if the natural operation of common motives had not been effectively counteracted by the system to which this ardent spirit was devoted. It is in fact, a circumstance highly remarkable, that neither of the epistles

of Peter contains the slightest allusion to the special distinction conferred upon him by his Master; nor indeed any general assertion of the sovereign dignity of the apostolic office. Humility itself breathes its sweetness in that one passage which refers to pastoral power.[5] Or if we do not feel at once the full force of this proof of the meekness and simplicity that the Gospel engendered, let us place these epistles by the side of some specimens of episcopal letters, belonging to the second and third centuries.

We well know what are those points of collision that bring fire from the soul of the fanatic:—the power and cruelty of the oppressor he can speak of only in terms of sympathetic rancour. But it was not thus that Peter refers to the authorities under which Christians had already suffered the most exasperating injuries; nor was it in any such mood that he laid down the rule of patience in tribulation, wrongfully inflicted. It is quite certain—or as certain as any moral evidence founded on the constant

[5] "Your Presbyters I exhort, who am a fellow-presbyter, &c..... Keep the fold of God—exercising the episcopal office not from compulsion; but readily and piously, κατὰ θεόν: neither from sordid motives; but in the spirit of fervour; nor yet as domineering over the heritage (τῶν κλήρων)."—Thus speaks the "Prince of the Apostles"—the "Vicar of Christ"—the "holder of the keys"—the "first Sovereign Pontiff;"—yes, the leader of the Popes!—and the predecessor of the Gregorys, the Innocents, the Leos, the Alexanders, of Rome!

A style far more becoming to ghostly lords than that of the Apostle was very soon adopted by Church dignitaries, a sample of which will properly be adduced on a future occasion.

laws of the moral world can make it—That the aged writer of the two epistles in question had not received an aggravation of the native faults of his character from Christianity; but on the contrary, that these tendencies were corrected, nay dispelled by its operation. Evidence of this sort can never approach nearer to conclusiveness than it does in the instance before us; and we hesitate not to draw from it an absolute historic inference—That the Gospel, *such as it was in the age of Peter,* had no malign or fanatical quality.

A very peculiar style, and a peculiar spirit too, distinguish the Epistle of JAMES. Besides the vigour, spirit, and simple majesty of the language, which carries us back to the age of the prophets, there is, throughout it, a bold and strait-forward good sense that scatters at a stroke the pretexts of hypocrisy, and the illusions of religious conceit. This venerable writer enters the Church, scourge in hand, to drive thence those corruptions which most readily find a lodgement under sacred roofs. Nevertheless the mode of reproof, and its terms, bespeak affection, as much as fidelity. James is severe, or rather penetrating; but not acrid or virulent. Especially he assails the characteristic faults of the Jewish mind—the religious arrogance, presumption, and laxity;—the asperity of mutual crimination, and that disposition (so remarkable in this people, and the parent

of faction) to assume, individually, a vindictive and intolerant jurisdiction over other men's conduct and opinions. If among the Jewish converts, as is probable from other evidence, the bad passions that infest spurious piety were then making their appearance in the infant Church, this apostolic writer at once discerned the incipient mischief, and employed all his energy for its exposure and repression.

The pretexts of hollow piety are the main subjects of the epistle of James; but a single passage, of a different purport, catches the eye, in which the enemies of the Gospel are brought under rebuke. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. — Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." If this commination be viewed in a general light only, as applicable to all instances of oppressive arrogance, it will come under the rule that is applicable to very many passages of the Scriptures, in which God, the Friend and Avenger of the poor and needy, utters, by the mouth of the prophet, the fierceness of his displeasure against the proud and the rapacious:—the style, the terms, and the matter of blame, are altogether in harmony with what we find so frequently in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets. This language then, of stern condemnation, is not to be attributed to *the writer* as characteristic of his personal

dispositions, until we have disproved his claim to be considered as the messenger of Heaven.

But there is room to believe that a more special reference is contained in the passage. The epistle was written, as it seems, a few years only (not more than eight) before the destruction of Jerusalem, and at a time when, forewarned as they had been by the Lord, and probably in a manner more explicit than appears in the Gospels, the Apostles could entertain no doubt of the near approach of the awful catastrophe of the nation. The signs of the coming desolation, were then gathering upon the heavens.—James, head of the Church at Jerusalem, and constantly resident there, could not look upon the infatuated Rulers of the people without descrying, as if inscribed upon the front of their pride and sumptuous magnificence, the divine sentence of reprobation, which so soon was to take effect.—He beheld these men adding to all their other crimes, the deeper guilt of rejecting the Messiah, and of persecuting his followers.—How then could he be silent when he saw Christians themselves, with a servile easiness, flattering the very persons upon whom the wrath of Heaven was just about to alight?—Do not, he asks, these same arrogant chiefs oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?—and is it in deference even to your persecutors, that ye despise the poor, and thrust him down in your assemblies to the

place of contempt?—What is this but implicitly to take part with the enemies of Christ, against yourselves? The disposition to pay court to the profligate and cruel masters of Israel must be checked;—and it is effectively checked in the passage which announces the unparalleled miseries that soon after fell upon the Jewish people. And yet the inference urged upon Christians is one of forbearance, not of revenge. "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And it was an inference too of peace and kindness among themselves. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned.—Behold the Judge standeth before the door."

The severity of JUDE, like that of James, is aimed, not at the mass of mankind, but at the Christian community itself, and employed chiefly to expose and condemn those very disorders whence fanaticism takes its rise. There had "crept in unawares" among the Christians, men, not only of dissolute life, but of vain, turbulent, and factious dispositions, who "despised dominion—spoke evil of dignities, and of things they understood not"—who, from the wildness and unprofitable exorbitancy of their minds, were not unfitly described as "clouds without water, carried about of winds; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." These men were "separatists"

also, and seem to have wanted little or nothing which might entitle them to rank with the most virulent or debauched of those who afterwards made the name of Jew a shame and terror through the world. It is manifest that the Jewish fanaticism, which was then fast reaching its height, spread itself by contagion within the precincts of the primitive church: this was only natural. All we have to do with is the treatment which the incursive evil received from the Apostles. On this point the short epistle of Jude affords the most satisfactory evidence.—Is it severe? yes, but the occasion was urgent; for there seemed not a little danger lest, by its mere proximity, the Christian body should be drawn into the vortex of the national frenzy, and swallowed in the whirlpool of its guilt and ruin. Yet if Jude be severe, where severity was necessary, he forgot not, as passionate reprovers so often do, discrimination and tenderness. "Of some," says he, "have compassion, *making a difference:* and others save with fear, plucking them out of the fire." The fanatic deals rather in sweeping condemnations.

Although it may seem peculiarly superfluous to prove that the writings of JOHN are of mild and benign tendency, yet there is a ground on which even these may properly come under our examination. It is well known that very serious corruptions have often sprung from modes of thinking apparently the most pure, or

sublime;—just as mighty rivers descend upon the common level of the world from heights that overlook the clouds, and where there are no storms to feed them. Human nature will not well bear to be lifted to a stage much above that of ordinary motives, or to be cut off from all correspondence with such motives. The dangerous experiment has been tried a thousand times, and has always failed:—it is tried anew in every age by lofty enthusiastic minds. Now, at a hasty glance, it might seem as if the first epistle of John (a treatise rather than an epistle) was of that very sort which engenders a supramundane or abstracted style of piety; and so, although itself free from rancorous ingredients, might, at second or third hand, become the source of unsocial feelings. Abstract or philosophic love is but another name for visionary selfishness; so it has proved in the instance of mystics of all sects.

But in such cases it will be found that the system of sentiment has been made to rest upon dogmas, metaphysic or abstruse, and hard to be expressed in familiar terms.—The "pure love of God," and of "all creatures in him," has been a stagnation of the soul, reflecting from its dead surface, not the smiling and various landscape around; but the mere vacancy of the skies. Has then the divine love which John describes and recommends, any such character of subtilty or refinement; or does it rest at all

upon a theoretic basis? Every reader of the catholic epistle must confess that it is not so. In the first place the singularly inartificial structure of this composition (so unlike the elaborate rhapsodies of the mystic) contradicts the supposition, and so does the homeliness of the style, which, instead of recommending itself to the fastidious taste of sensitive recluses, seems specially adapted to the uninstructed class of readers. But the main circumstance of distinction is this—That the very drift of the whole treatise—the point which, at all events is to be secured, and which rises to view in each paragraph, till it seems a tautology, is, that no profession of love to God can for a moment be admitted as genuine, or as better than "a lie," if it does not constantly and consistently prove itself to include the love of benevolence towards all around us. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Now this plain appeal to common sense is a concise refutation of the principle of mystic religion, which we find to be, that what is occult, is always more worthy than what is sensible or visible. But St. John makes what is occult subordinate to what is visible. Or it might be said that he utterly sets at naught and spurns all modes of religious sentiment that are too sublime to be measured by the very simplest maxims of common virtue. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in

tongue; but in deed and in truth."—Or if an exhortation so clear needed a comment, we find it at hand:—"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

The epistle of John ought then to be regarded not as a germ of mysticism; but on the contrary, as a plain and pointed caution against every form of hyperbolic piety. The ultimate reason of this caution is not indeed the one which secular men will approve; for it does not assume all elevated and intense emotions fixed on unseen objects to be absurd or pernicious. Far otherwise; for the apostle carries the notion of true piety to the very highest point, even to that height of "perfect love," which "casteth out fear."—But while he does so, he employs all his force in strengthening the connexion (which the Mystic labours to weaken) between the offices of pity and charity, and those exalted motives that should animate virtue.—In a word, the religion of John is not abstruse, but intelligible; not theoretic, but practical; not monastic, but domestic:—it is the very religion which the Soffee, and the Platonist, and the Pietist, and the Monk, spurn as vulgar, or *natural*, in comparison with his own, which he declares to be "celestial."

To the "beloved disciple" was assigned the task of closing the sacred canon, and of setting

the apostolic seal upon the religion of Christ after the lapse of a period which saw it exposed to perils of every kind. The most serious and fatal corruptions had in fact, before the death of John, connected themselves with the new profession, and had drawn towards it; — just as smaller bodies, and the scum and the wrecks of things, rush into the wake of a stately vessel that rapidly plows the waves. Before the close of the first century there was much room to fear that certain impious and licentious doctrines, bred in the east, should so far borrow, (or rather steal) recommendations from the Gospel, as to bring the Gospel itself into disrepute, as well as to pervert many of its followers. The most decisive measures on the part of those who watched for the welfare of the community, were absolutely necessary to preserve the very existence of the Church amid these dangers. The Gnostic, the Cerinthian, and others of the like order, were to be deprived of the aid and credit they drew from the name of Christ. — "If there come any unto you, and bring not the doctrine (already known and authenticated) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Sacred truth must, when put in peril, be preferred to courtesy or hospitality; and he who will be the friend of all, at whatever cost, or by means of whatever compromise, possesses rather the semblance of charity than its substance. We ought, on this rule, to keep in mind the

distinction between a necessary firmness, or even severity, in preserving the outworks of religion, and that churlish rigidity which impels a man to become a sectarist.—The first is known by its taking its stand always on capital or primary and well understood principles;—the second, by its zeal for whatever is secondary, unimportant, unintelligible, and ambiguous.

The most signal and significant of the instances that belong to the review now in hand remains to be considered.

If the natural disposition of Peter, such as it betrays itself in the Gospels, would lead us to look narrowly to the turn which Christianity gave to his sentiments and conduct, the temper of PAUL, much more, invites scrutiny, inasmuch as he makes his entry upon the stage of church history in the very character of a fanatic;—a fanatic too, not by accident or external inducement, or secular interest, but by the vehemence of his spirit, and the original bias of his mind. That the business of persecution was undertaken by this extraordinary youth freely, is made evident by what we afterwards see to have been his character; for Paul, it is certain, was no subservient being—no tool, and not the man to receive direction from others. Zeal so furious, in so young a bosom, must be held to mark the native disposition; and perhaps few of those who have figured on the ensanguined theatre of religious cruelty—from Antiochus to our own

Bonner or Laud, would have been able to support their claims to a bad preeminence by the side of Saul of Tarsus, if the dazzling light of heaven had not met him on his way to Damascus, and turned the course of his life, as well as changed his heart. The definition of Fanatic wants little which it does not find in this instance, if we assume as our guide the brief narrative of his early conduct, as commented on by himself. The question presents itself then, concerning this Fanatic-born—did Christianity amend, or did it aggravate his disposition?

There are on record a few instances of sudden and extraordinary conversions which have passed over the moral faculties with the force of a hurricane, or of an inundation, sweeping away almost every trace of what heretofore had marked the character:—the man has not remained after the change what he was, in any other sense hardly than that of bare physical identity.—The warrior and prince, for example, laying down his pride, his plumes, his schemes of empire, and his insatiate passions, has become a self-denying, inane monk!—the lips which a while ago uttered thunders and made kingdoms tremble, lisp pater-nosters through the dull watches of the night; and the eyes that shot fire in the bloody combat, are moistened with feeble tears, or peruse the floor of a cell! Now it is especially to be noted that the conversion of Saul was not of this sort;—it was no dissolution

of nature. If we had met him (uninformed of what had happened) some years after the change in his course of life, and having known him before it took place, we should perhaps scarcely have divined the fact from his manner or appearance.—The same animation—the same spirit and impetuosity—the very same sparkle of the eye; the same indefatigable industry and impatience of rest. We should have seen indeed that the labours and cares of active life had marked his features; but assuredly should not have said that the bright promise of energy and intelligence had been blighted, or had passed off, into a dull and flaccid imbecility.

The narrative contained in the Acts of the Apostles abundantly proves that Paul's conversion, though it turned the current of his native energy, did not in any degree dry it up. Nor even did his submission to the maxims of the Gospel (curbing the irascible passions as they do) render him so tame or passive in matters of civil right and privilege as perhaps might have been imagined. The instances are of a remarkable kind, and they serve to demonstrate that, while receiving meekly the most extreme ill-treatment which his profession of Christianity brought upon him, and from which Roman law afforded no relief, he never lost sight of any judicial distinction that might avail to skreen him from lawless rage, or magisterial tyranny.

Neither was Paul's spirit as a man broken, nor

his sensibilities blunted, nor the vigour and fine finish of his understanding impaired, by his change of principles. His speeches on public occasions afford convincing proof to the contrary, in each of these particulars; and when brought into comparison, one with another, present a very rare example of the faculty which enables a man to adapt himself, at a moment, to the prejudices or capacities of the persons he addresses: or, if separately viewed, they give evidence of the possession of powers not often assembled in the same individual.—There is found in them the indications of fire and sensitiveness, conjoined with self-command, courage, and moderation.—There is an immoveable attachment to principles, together with the most flexible accommodation of the mode and subject of discourse to the personal or national feelings of all parties; and a rare facundity—we might say exuberance of mind, along with the strictest adherence to the ultimate point towards which, from the first, he tends.

The actual influence of Christianity, such as it was in its first era, is then subjected to an *experimentum crucis* in the case of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Idle would it be to say—Such and such dogmas or motives, belonging to the Gospel, or implied in it, and affirmed in the epistles of Paul, could not fail to have a malignant or uncharitable influence. In refutation of any hypothetic argument of this sort, we boldly make our

appeal to an example that wants nothing to render it conclusive.—Christianity found Saul of Tarsus a fanatic, both by temper and habit:—a life of privations and injuries naturally exacerbates a fiery disposition, and beyond doubt, "Paul the aged" would have become one of the sternest and most implacable of fanatics the world has seen, if the system he embraced had actually favoured that order of feeling; or in truth, if it had not exerted a mighty efficacy altogether of an opposite kind. We turn then, for a moment, to his epistles. And with our particular object in view, it is natural to distribute them in three classes, the *first* consisting of those which exhibit the doctrines and duties of religion in an abstract form, or without specific reference to parties or occasions. The *second* comprising those that bear upon the disorders or controversies existing in certain communities; and the *third*—including the private and clerical epistles.

I. Of the FIRST CLASS, the most general, or *impersonal*, is the epistle to the Hebrews; and the fact which meets us at a glance, as pertinent to our inquiry, though of a negative kind, ought not to be slighted.—The elaborate argument of this treatise is addressed to the Jewish converts to Christianity;—now when a man has broken himself off from a communion of which once he was the zealous supporter, and especially if he have received cruel injuries from his former

friends, it is almost a constant thing to find him casting contempt upon the system he has renounced, and taking a position as remote as possible from the one whence his irritated opponents assail him. And why should not the rule hold good in the instance before us? Spurned and persecuted by the Jewish authorities, and made the minister of an economy which avowedly was to supersede the ancient dispensation, what would have been more natural than that he should exult over the falling fabric of the Mosaic law, and indulge in the bitterness and irony common to controversy, and especially to controversy in the hands of a renegade. But in contrariety to any such supposition, the epistle to the Hebrews renders a homage to the Mosaic institutions, and to the principles and practices of the Jewish religion, as cordial and full, as could have been offered by Gamaliel himself. The difference between Paul and Gamaliel related only to the intention, or to the interpretation of the Law, and its rites. The Pentateuch sustains no disparagement in the hands of the apostle, who though he was preaching to all nations an economy which implies the abrogation of that of Moses, would not erect the new upon the ruins of the old; but rather builds the new upon the old, as its immovable foundation. If at all he inculpates the ancient institute, he does so only in compliance with a divine declaration, to that effect, uttered long before:—"If

that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."

And if the author of this treatise does not vilify the party he had left, neither does he flatter the party he had joined:—not any of the spite on the one side, nor of the partiality on the other of the sectarist, is found in him.—"I have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing, and instead of making the progress which might have been expected, have need to be taught afresh the very elements of your profession." And yet this reproof does not spring from a petulance which will be always finding fault, even with friends and favourites; for the kindest expressions almost immediately follow.—"Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you:—God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love."

Not to insist upon several express admonitions to a peaceable and charitable behaviour, and to patience under persecution, we may safely affirm that a calm, erudite, and refined argument, such as that of this treatise, must be adjudged the product of a mind habitually serene, as well as devout, and of a mind which, even by the complication of its inferences, is proved to possess that equipoise of

the understanding, which, whether original or acquired, never consists with the prevalence of turbulent and rancorous passions.

The epistle to the Romans, if in some respects more personal than that to the Hebrews, is yet, in the main, a theological and ethical treatise, rather than a letter, and is in the same way available as proof of the calm command which the writer retained of the reasoning faculty—a command very likely to be lost in a long course of perils, privations, changes of scene, injurious treatment, and public labour; even if the native temperament be tranquil, much more if it be susceptible of strong excitements. Is it to be believed that, if the youthful violence and bigotry of the writer had been kept alive by Christianity, the combined influence of original temper, a stimulating system of opinions, and a life like that of the persecuted Paul, would have left him, at sixty, a reasoner such as he appears in the epistle to the Romans?

Some kind of exaggeration or distortion of the principles of virtue characterises always fanaticism, and belongs to it under every modification. If at any time there arise a controversy between common sense and good morals on the one side, and some exorbitant and turgid pretension to heroic virtue on the other, no such event will ever happen as that the Fanatic should range himself on the side of the former, against the latter:—quite otherwise, and as if by irresistible

attraction, does he pass over toward whatever is disproportioned, tumid, enormous, violent; and as certainly he assails whatever is just and modest. With a like certainty do dense mephitic vapours subside into caverns and sepulchres; while inflammable gases mount to the upper sky. Now a controversy, precisely of this sort, was abroad in the age of the apostles. — The strait and rigid portion of the Jewish people had carried to the utmost extreme the national propensity to sanctimonious pride, in contempt of every plain principle of morality. The Jewish idea of virtue and piety, at that time, might fitly be compared to the image one obtains of a distant temple or palace, when seen through a knotted and misshapen lens:—high and low are reversed; the pinnacles seem to prop the columns;—the foundations are heaved aloft;—chasms gape in the midst;—every line is broken, and the wings are disjoined from the body. In what manner then did Paul assail these illusions? Not as a fanatic of some adverse school might have done, by opposing one extravagance to another. But (as we actually find in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans) by leading the minds of men back, in the most vigorous style of reprobatory eloquence, to the great principles of justice, continence, temperance, and piety. After solemnly asserting the righteous government of God, with what force does he bring home the unquestioned maxims

of law upon the seared pride of the licentious and self-complacent Jew!—"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God!—through breaking of the law dishonourest thou God?—Thou teacher of the law, dost thou steal, commit adultery, and sacrilege?"—This, we say, is sound reason, opposed to corruption, evasions and perversity; and it carries ample proof of the integrity of the writer's understanding.

But there is a test of character which yet remains to be sought for. Does then Paul use truth and reason as mere instruments of violence in assailing an adversary? (for this is sometimes seen) does he drive with indiscriminate fury over the ground, sweeping all things before him, good and bad?—In stripping his mistaken countrymen of their cloak of lies, does he rend away their garment also—their genuine advantage? It is not so. After bringing his arraignment of national casuistry to a just conclusion—a conclusion utterly foreign to the modes of thinking then in vogue—namely, That the true circumcision "is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God;" he takes up instantly the opposite position, which might seem to have been endangered, and becomes himself the advocate of Jewish distinctions, so far as they were valid. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?—MUCH EVERY

WAY." This is precisely the course of moderation;—this is that gathering up of an argument on all sides, which a wise and temperate man, who is labouring only for truth, will take care not to leave another to do for him. If this is to be deemed the style of the inflated and acrimonious Fanatic, or of the partisan and bigot, we must give up every attempt to establish distinctions, and must grant that all moral characteristics are nugatory. Let us only imagine ourselves to have heard the young Saul disputing against Christianity with his comrades, on his road to Damascus; can we suppose that his argument would have been balanced in any such equitable manner? It is conspicuous and unquestionable that the Gospel, *such as Paul found it*, instead of fomenting in any way the natural intolerance of his temper, had actually restored the equilibrium of his mind, and had taught the zealot to be just!

To prove that ALL MEN stand on the very same level of guilt in the righteous estimation of the Impartial Judge, is an argument the fanatic lets alone, if he does not impugn it.—We shall never see him equalizing pretensions of all sorts, in language such as follows.—"What then, are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.—All are gone out of the way—have become unprofitable;—there is none that doeth good—no, not one!"

This doctrine the fanatic places on some other ground than that of the universal principles of morality, and he always appends to it some saving clause or evasion, such as shall turn aside from himself its humbling inference.

But if, in Paul's account, condemnation be universal, grace is so too, at least in its aspect toward mankind, and in its proposals.—As there is no difference in guilt, so is there none, either in the conditions of pardon, or in the eligibility of men to the Divine favour. "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also." And it is now true, as the same writer expresses it in another place, that, under the banner of Christ, there are no exclusions and no peculiarities.—"Greek and Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus:" or to use the equivalent language of another Apostle—That God puts no difference between man and man;—is no respecter of persons; but that "in EVERY NATION he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."—Bright expansion of heavenly glory! Welcome news from on high! with emphasis may we say, in hearing this canon of grace—"The true light now shineth!" But what we have specifically to do with is this only—That the men who spent all their strength as preachers and writers in promulgating such a doctrine, and in an age too such as the one they actually lived in, were

assuredly no fanatics. And let it be told that these preachers of universal good-will were not Grecian sages, but Jews;—Jews born and bred in the very ferment of bigotry. Moreover the most conspicuous of this band of innovators burst upon the world in the very character of a sanguinary zealot—"a Hebrew of the Hebrews"—a sanctimonious Pharisee—and by early propensity "a persecutor and injurious."—We loudly defy contradiction in affirming then, That Christianity, such as the Apostles held it, was not fanatical.

As matter of argument it must be deemed quite superfluous, and yet as matter of *impression* it might be proper, to adduce the preceptive and concluding portions of this same epistle to the Romans in proof of the symmetry and completeness of that moral code which the writer promulgates or enforces. And after doing so, we should be entitled to the inference, on another ground, that he was no fanatic;—for the fanatic never fails to exaggerate or deform morality, on the one side, or on the other. We must not however omit to mention (for it is of peculiar importance) the decisive assertion of the duty of submitting to civil powers that occurs in the 13th chapter of this epistle. Taking with us our modern anxious notions of civil liberty, we might perhaps covet to find in this noted passage, some exception made in favour of popular rights. Be this desire reasonable or not,

it is certain that so full and clear a statement of the relative duty of magistrate and subject, *in favour of the former,* is in a high degree remarkable, as coming from a man who, through a long course of years, had endured all sorts of wrongs from the "powers that then were"—both Jewish and Roman. No exasperation; it is evident, had grown as a habit upon the writer's mind. He did not (fanatic-like) seek to revenge himself upon dignities and thrones, by sapping, in the opinions of the infant sect, the foundations of political obedience. In later ages it is hard to find, among the persecuted, parallel instances of forbearance.

If Christians of every age had but paid deference to it, the 14th chapter of this epistle contains, within the compass of a few verses, a comprehensive refutation of every pretext of religious faction, whether urged by the refractory, or by the despotic party. The simplest principles are always those which mankind are the slowest to learn. It has been so in philosophy;—it has been so in the business of civil government;—and it is so in matters of religion. A doctrine which, when expressed at large, seems too trite or obvious to be formally announced, and which asks no proof, is the very point that the perversity of the human mind evades or shuns. To whatever causes the pertinacity of sectarism may be attributed (a question foreign to our subject) it remains certain

that Christianity, *as taught by the Apostles,* is wholly guiltless of the mischief. The chapter just named, and another of like import,[6] abundantly refute the calumny that the Religion of Christ is generative of discords. The wit of man could devise no cautionary provision against such evils more complete, more conclusive, or more perspicuous, than the one we here find. Precept, argument, instruction, have done their utmost. With what freshness and vigour do good sense and charity breathe combined in every phrase and verse of this chapter! If we have been wading through the noisome quags of church squabbles (ancient or modern) the effect upon the mind of turning to this passage—bright and clear, is like that of escaping from a pestilential swamp, where we were tormented by the musquito, to a hill-top on which the gales are pure, the sky clear, and the prospect unbounded! To quote any single verse of the chapter, apart from its context, were a damage; for the whole is closely woven together in conformity with the genuine rules of natural and manly eloquence. It only remains to remind the reader (after he has turned to the passage) of the conclusion—That the writer of the epistle, whatever might have been his temper in early life, was no fanatic at the time when he addressed the Christians of Rome.

[6] 1 Cor. xiii.

Evidence to the same effect, both of a negative and positive kind, might be drawn from the epistles to the churches at Ephesus and at Colosse. Besides the purity and simplicity of the ethical portions of these letters, which bespeak a sound and tranquil mind, the only special points to be adverted to, are the explicit assertion in both epistles, of the equalization of religious privileges, and the nullity of those exclusive pretensions on which the Jew founded his contempt of the bulk of mankind.—"Christ," says the Apostle, "is our peace, who hath made Jew and Gentile one, having broken down the middle wall of partition."—Again: "Ye therefore are no more strangers and foreigners; but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." We find also in the epistle to the Colossians a very remarkable (shall we say a *prophetic*) caution against that spirit of mingled superstition and fanaticism—of presumption and servility, which so soon made its appearance in the Church, and rapidly spread, and actually held its sway, undisputed, more than a thousand years. The voluntary (*or artificial*) humiliations—the worshipping of angels—the sanctimonious abstinences—the human traditions—the specious piety, and the idle tormenting of the body;—in a word, all the elements of the great apostasy are here designated in the most distinct manner; or as if the many-coloured corruptions of the tenth century had vividly

passed before the eye of the writer. How sound and healthy is that piety and that morality which he recommends in opposition to all such absurdities!

II. We turn next to those of the epistles of Paul which, in a more direct manner, are personal communications from the writer to the parties addressed, and which, as they relate to local controversies, disagreements, or partialities, rife at the moment, may be expected to exhibit more of the writer's sensitiveness than a bare theological treatise, or a hortatory letter is likely to display. The genuine character and dispositions of an author naturally become most conspicuous on those occasions when he is wrought upon by personal feelings. Six of the Pauline epistles come under this description; and we first advert to those that are altogether of an amicable kind, and embody the writer's lively affection to two favoured societies.

The epistle "to the faithful at Philippi" is a warm expression of feeling, such as is proper to an endeared personal friendship, resting on the basis of a thorough confidence. The tenderness and the graciousness that pervade it are much to our present purpose; and so is that spirit of lofty and fervent piety which it breathes; for these are conclusive proof of what the influence of Christianity was in its pristine era. But we shall pause only at certain specific indications of

the temper of the writer. The first of these is of an extraordinary sort, and may appear to contradict the supposition, drawn from other sources, that the apostles maintained the honours of their high function by a stern and efficacious rebuke of factious proceedings. But the truth seems to be that, although on urgent occasions, and when they had to deal hand to hand with the contumacious sectarist or pernicious heretic, they used with promptitude "the power which the Lord had given them," their native feelings, abhorrent of the despotic and jealous course customary with spiritual dignities, restrained them from employing penal powers, if by any means it could be avoided. What Paul's inner dispositions were in relation to contentious or ambitious zealots, we here perceive.—"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife—of contention, not sincerely, supposing (intending) to add affliction to my bonds.—What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice!" Can this be the language of the man who, some thirty years before, had been seen raging up and down through the streets of Jerusalem, and cramming its dungeons with innocent women and children? Christianity truly had done his temper no harm in the interval!

In personal conflict with these vexatious demagogues, Paul might perhaps, from a sense of

public duty, have assumed another tone; but we see that when, in the freedom of private friendship, he refers to the rancour of such teachers toward himself, his mind was not that of the despot, or of the fanatic.—It is evident, on the contrary, that much personal proficiency in the virtues of self-command, qualified him to admonish others—"to be of one accord, of one mind;—to do nothing through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than themselves."

A similar affection was borne by the apostle to the Thessalonian Christians: and on the strength of that affection, and in the spirit of conscious integrity, he appeals to them to attest, as well the integrity as the mildness of his ministerial conduct among them. A foreknowledge, probably, of the vengeance then impending the Jewish people, and near to fall upon the rebellious city, seems to be couched in the terms he employs when speaking of his outrageous countrymen. Yet it cannot be said that the passage breathes a vindictive spirit, or that it is unbecoming the occasion.—"THE WRATH (that specific judgment, long ago threatened) is come upon them to the utmost, who both killed the Lord Jesus, as they did their own prophets; and have persecuted us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men—forbidding the progress of the Gospel among the Gentiles." Yet the painful theme is instantly dropped, and

happier sentiments—the characteristic sentiments of the writer's mind, prevail.

It is not (as we need hardly affirm) a simple declaration of the Divine displeasure against sin, or the authorized announcement of approaching judgment, that indicate the fanatic;—for this office may in fact be the highest work of charity, and may be performed under the impulse of the warmest benevolence. But it is when the wrath of heaven is a man's chosen and constant theme, and when, without any commission to that effect, he takes upon him to hurl the bolts of the Most High, this way and that—at individuals or at communities:—it is then that we justly impute malevolence, as well as a gloomy extravagance of temper. Now when we find, in the second of Paul's epistles to the believers of Thessalonica, one of the most appalling descriptions of the future wrath that the Bible any where contains, it may be enough to compare the insulated passage with the general tenor of the writer's letters for the purpose of proving that "the perdition of ungodly men" was as far as possible from being the topic toward which his thoughts continually tended, and upon which (as is the fanatic) he was always copious, eloquent, and at ease. But we are bound to go further; and while we pause (in the next chapter) at the prophetic description of the great apostasy that, seven centuries afterwards, should reach its height, who does not stand back, as if in the

Divine Presence, and confess that it is not Paul, but the Omniscient God who speaks?—Every phrase of terror—is it not deep as the thunder of Heaven? When the Supreme thus distinctly utters his voice from on high, let him that dares come forward to arraign the style?

But we are soon brought back to the level of human sentiments, and again see the writer's genuine character in the casual expression of his mind, as occasions arise. "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Here is apostolic vigour—necessary for the general good; nevertheless the culprit is not forgotten; much less consigned to vengeance.—"Yet count him not as an enemy; but admonish him as a brother." The caution this, of a paternal heart.

The two epistles to the Christians of Corinth, and the one to those of Galatia, are marked by a speciality of meaning in every part, and also by a frequent admixture of personal feelings; yet of a different kind from that which distinguishes the letters last mentioned. Capital errors, and practical abuses, and church disorders in the one instance, and a grave perversion of doctrine in the other, brought into play the sterner elements of the apostolic character, and we see, by this means, not only what was the writer's style of reproof; but what was the temper called up in him by open and irritating opposition to

his just authority. Shall it not be now, that young SAUL—the tyro of Gamaliel, is to reappear on the stage, while PAUL, the disciple of Jesus, stands aside?

The evidence is before us. Nothing can be more free and natural than the manner of these compositions; nothing more lively or spirited. If we want native expressions of a writer's very soul, here we have them. And it may be added that, while these three epistles abound with those incidental allusions to facts and to persons which place their genuineness far beyond doubt, they present also, in a remarkable degree, those fresh touches of human sentiment—absolutely inimitable, which alone would be enough to assure all who have any perception of truth and nature, that we are conversing with real and living objects; not with spurious images.

The first topic that meets us, and the one which manifestly was uppermost in the writer's mind, is that of the factions that had sprung up among the Corinthian converts.—We reach then here the very point of our *experimentum crucis*. —In what manner does the religious Chief deal with the divisions of those who (many of them) were calling in question his apostolic authority? Now not to insist upon that general rule of policy which leads a chief to manage factions for his own advantage; or to play one party against another, it is certain that, if a man's own spirit be factious—if he harbour a secret

virulence, the tendencies of nature will draw him on, ere he is aware, and even against his sense of personal discretion, to take a side, and to join in the fray. Whatever tone of impartiality he may assume, or how sincerely soever he may wish to compose the feud, he will be sure to throw in some pungent matter that shall increase the ferment.—But Paul on this occasion neither acts the wily part of the adroit demagogue, nor the involuntary part of the fanatic. He grants not the slightest favour, even by any indirect inference, to his personal adherents in the Corinthian church. But on the contrary, without distinction, condemns and contemns the sectarists of those four denominations.—"Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ!—Is then Christ divided?" And while "one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" Yes, "babes in Christ"—persons who, notwithstanding all their boasted gifts, were in fact only just opening their eyes (if so much) upon the world of truth. And who is Paul, and who Apollos? Will you say Leaders and Princes in the Church? nay, nothing more than subservient agents in the hand of the Lord. "Let a man so account of us as the ministers (MENIALS) of Christ, and stewards only of the mysteries of God."

There is neither guile nor ambition in this: nor can it be thought to savour of the smothered

inflammatory style of one whose factious temper is always getting the better of his sense of interest and his motives of policy. The blow is aimed at the very root of discord; and the apostles themselves would retreat from the place of honour that belonged to them, if no other means could be found for withdrawing their names from the banners of a party. "In handling this subject," says Paul, "I have thus used my own name and that of Apollos, that ye might learn in us (though in fact we be rightful chiefs in the Church) not to think of any above what is enjoined; and that no one of you be inflated with zeal for one, against another."

Yet must the apostolic authority be exerted in a manner that shall inspire the disorderly with fear. Yes; but it is not the personal antagonists of Paul that are selected as the objects of the supernatural infliction:—a shameless violator of the common principles of morality is the victim. "In the name of the Lord Jesus, let the incestuous man be delivered unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh; that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

Whatever incidental evils may arise from that separation and seclusion which Christianity involves, they would all, or nearly all, be avoided, if the apostolic rule were but adhered to, such as we find it luminously laid down in these epistles to the Corinthians, and which, if reduced into an abstract form, might be thus expressed:

—That the rigours of church discipline should be made to bear upon *the society itself,* while a bland, unscrupulous and unsanctimonious courtesy of behaviour on the part of Christians towards others, allows the leaven of the Gospel freely to mingle itself with the general mass of mankind. What can more approve itself to reason than a principle like this? What can be more unlike the supercilious monasticism and the morose sectarism of the fanatic? Indeed sectarists and fanatics of all classes, and in every age, have just reversed the apostolic canon.—That is to say, they have enclosed themselves and their sanctity in a coop of pride, so as to deprive the profane world of the benefit it might have got from the spectacle of virtue so exalted; and at the same time have expended their entire fund of indulgences—one upon another. Nothing has been so hard as to get admission into the exquisite circle of purity;—nothing so easy as to live there when once admitted! It has been like climbing a painful and rugged steep—to find at the summit, a luxurious level.

The apostle would have it quite otherwise. Let us stop to gaze a moment upon his golden, but much-neglected maxim of church polity. Alas, that the roll of church history illustrates its excellence so often by contrarieties!

"I have here been enjoining you not to hold any intercourse with persons of impure manners; (but do not misunderstand me) I am not

speaking of worldly men, whether covetous or rapacious, or idolatrous; for to observe any such rule in relation to them would be to exclude yourselves altogether from the social economy. On the contrary, my meaning is, that you should maintain no intimacy with one who, making a profession of the Gospel, and calling himself a brother, is licentious, avaricious, profane; is addicted to slander, or is intemperate, or rapacious. For what affair of mine is it to exercise jurisdiction over those who have not voluntarily placed themselves within the circle of church censure? Such belong to the Divine Tribunal. But judge ye those of your own society:—and in the present instance, excommunicate this same flagitious person."

How might the Church by this time, and long ago, have spread itself through the world, and its purity have been maintained, if regard had been paid to the simple rule we have quoted! The same law of charity and integrity, expanded and applied to the difficult question of social communication with idolaters, is brought forward again in the 8th and 10th chapters.—Shall we find any one so uncandid or so perverted in spirit as to refuse to Paul the praise of high good sense, as well as of benignity in this instance? The whole of the practical instructions that fill the middle chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthian church, are eminently characteristic of a calm and temperate mind; and stand in full

opposition to the crooked policy, to the acrid bigotry, to the imbecile conscientiousness, and to the foul hypocrisy that so often have deformed the profession of the Gospel.

Must apostolic rigour pursue its victim with inexorable wrath? Far from it. How does the paternal spirit of Paul rejoice (in the second epistle) over the repentant culprit! "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment;—comfort him, therefore, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.—Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him." A Father in the midst of his children does not sooner relent, or hasten more to meet a penitent son, than does this apostle, as we see him administering the affairs of the infant churches.

A delicate part remained to be performed in reference to the indispensable duty of asserting the apostolic power, impugned as it had been by a factious Jewish party at Corinth. In measure the argument was a personal controversy; yet did it involve common principles. The occasion was precisely one of that peculiar and difficult kind on which a public person feels that he must defend himself, as an individual, against those who, in assailing his single reputation, mean much more than to tread a fair name in the dust: in such a case the timid, or the falsely modest, give ground;—and murky pride throws up public interests, rather than descend to explanations with a despised antagonist; while

the arrogant or despotic chief comes out in ire to repel the assault, and thinks only how best to save his personal importance.

The course taken by the Apostle is quite of a different sort. The mingled strain of apology, remonstrance, and entreaty, which closes the epistle to the Corinthians, brings together, in admirable combination, the emotions of a highly sensitive, generous, humble, and yet noble mind, striving alternately with itself, and with its sense of public duty. The abrupt transitions, the frequent interrogations, the sudden appeals, and the genial warmth of the whole, impart an historic life to the passage, such as makes the reader think that he sees and hears the speaker actually before him. It is saying little to affirm that a composition of this order stands immensely remote from the suspicion of spuriousness:—if this be not reality, the objects that now press upon the senses are not real; and the stamp of truth which marks it, involves also the truth of the Christian system. But this is not all;—for if we ought in any case to rely upon the universal principles of human nature, as they are gathered from history and observation, we may affirm that it is the property of gloomy or malignant opinions, or of notions that are preposterous and exaggerated, to impart a certain fixedness or monotony to the mind and temper:—the passions become set;—the style of expression, even if vehement and copious, is of

one order only;—the themes of discourse are few, and the drift is ever the same. Were it demanded to assign some single characteristic which should mark the fanatic in every case, this same *exclusiveness* might be given as the infallible sign. On the contrary, a free play of the faculties and emotions, and a graceful versatility of mind, is the distinction of those who live in the light, and inhale the pure breezes of day. An expansive benevolence, conjoined with the mild affections of common life, not only renders the heart sensitive on all sides, but imparts an interchangeable mobility to the entire circle of feelings, so that transitions from one to another are easy and rapid;—the character, in its general aspect, is pleasantly diversified. The storms of December are of one hue, and rush across the heavens in one direction; but the Summer's sky has many colours, and a new beauty for every hour.

Now we might assume the rapid interchange of subjects and sentiments, and the abruptness of the style, and its sparkling vivacity, in the passage before us, as sufficient proof of our position, that the mind of Paul, far from having been rigidly fixed in one mood by Christianity, had actually acquired, under its influence, more copiousness of feeling than his early course seemed to promise. The Gospel had made him—we appeal confidently to the instance now before us—the Gospel had made Paul a man of *much*

feeling, and of *many* feelings. But fanaticism, if it quickens some single sensibility, renders others torpid, and after a while reduces the character to the narrowest range, or brings on intellectual atrophy.

We have yet to advert, for a moment, to the epistle to the Christian societies of Galatia; but do not meddle with what belongs in it to the theologian, and which has often enough been treated of: what is pertinent to our immediate purpose may soon be said. Written about the middle of his apostolic course, and at the season of ripened manhood, it may be assumed to exhibit the effect of Christianity after it had fully settled itself upon the moral and mental habits of Paul, and before the force of his spirit had become at all abated. We find in it, as we might expect, the highest degree of vigour and vivacity; as well as a very decisive tone, and even an authoritative challenge of submission to his dictates in matters of religious truth. There is nothing feeble in this epistle: and yet we meet indications of that paternal tenderness which distinguishes his addresses to the best-loved churches: there is the same candour too in acknowledging whatever was laudable among these societies; and moreover such a mixture of abstract argument with personal persuasion as indicates the writer's desire to deal reasonably with whoever would listen to reason. Five-sixths of the whole com-

position is calm explanation of facts, or adduction of evidence. But this is not the style of offended pride, when it rankles in the bosom of an intemperate and irritated dignitary.

Yet the main feature of the epistle to the Galatians is the breadth of the practical principles it supports, and the opposition it offers to the bigotry, superstition, and spiritual pride of the Jewish teachers. If Paul be vehement, it is always in behalf of common sense and liberality: if he be indignant, it is when he mantles to break the chain of spiritual despotism: if he be stern, it is to uphold consistency.—Even Peter he "withstood to the face," on account of culpable compliances with Jewish sanctimoniousness. The obsolete system of national seclusion he discards, by affirming that now, within the Christian Church, all extrinsic distinctions are merged. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female;—for all are one in Christ Jesus." That superstition too, which waits only an accidental excitement to kindle into virulent fanaticism, he treats with objurgation and contempt. "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereto ye desire again to be in bondage?—Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.—I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain!"—"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not

entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—"In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love." And yet this liberty was not libertinism. "Use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but by love serve one another."—"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

But this is that very style of sound sense and moderation, and that GENERALIZATION OF PRINCIPLES, WITHOUT LAXITY, which so grievously offends the imbecile pietist, the scrupulous bigot, and the virulent fanatic.—It is the style of Paul; and his invariable use of it carries forward our present argument toward a triumphant issue.

III. The four epistles to individuals—especially the three that are clerical or official, demand to be reviewed.

The question in hand might, with very little hazard—perhaps with none, be made to rest upon the solitary evidence of the epistle to Philemon. If we knew nothing more of the writer's temper than what breaks upon us through the tenderness and grace of this short letter (and were informed also that the same person had commenced his course as a sanguinary zealot) the proof would be complete, that the system under which his character had been matured, must have been of the most

benign sort. No such inconsistency has ever presented itself on the various field of human nature as that of a man who being by constitutional tendency fierce and despotic, after yielding himself through a long course of years to the influence of a gloomy creed, was yet, at the close of life, such as this letter declares "Paul the aged" to have been. It is certain then, that Paul's creed was not gloomy; but on the contrary, benign; and benign in the most active and efficacious sense. Is there not in the epistle to Philemon a melody of love, struck from the chords of a nicely attuned heart? Yet it was the Gospel, not Nature that so attuned it.

If a man's character is to be known more certainly from his conversation with his intimate friends or family, than from his public harangues, so, and for the same reasons, a private correspondence is more available for such a purpose than a general treatise. And again, if there be any one species of personal and private correspondence which, more than another, lays open a writer's secret principles, it is that carried on between men of the same profession or calling, on subjects involving the credit and interests of that calling. The sentiments of public persons towards the commonalty over which they exercise a control founded altogether on *opinion*, are very apt to assume an aspect either of hostility, or of craftiness. Then when such official persons interchange their private

feelings, and especially when a superior of the order conveys instructions to the subaltern, there will infallibly peep out, in some part, the sinister sentiment—the harboured grudge, the sly maxims of *professional prudence,* or the lurking acrimony and arrogance toward the populace — if in fact any such oblique motive or principle exist in the mind of the writer; nor will any discretion avail to prevent its appearance.

Now having before us a writer's various compositions, if we go over them all, beginning with those of a general or abstract kind, and advance to such as are more specific, and at last open the packet of his private and professional papers, we compass him on all sides;—we beleaguer his very soul—throw open the "keep" of his heart, and leave him no chance of maintaining his concealment.—If Paul may not be known from his two letters to Timothy, and that to Titus, no writer can at all be judged of from the records he has left of himself. The genuineness of these letters is abundantly established, and by the best sort of proof. No one competent to estimate literary evidence can even pretend to doubt of it.—Moreover they were composed (the last of them especially) very near the close of the writer's apostolic course, and when his mind had admitted all the influence it could admit from the system to which his life had been devoted. They were addressed too, to subordinates in

office; yet to men endeared and familiar by community in labours and sufferings. What forbids us then—what rule of historic evidence, acknowledged as valid, forbids us to assume these same letters as CONCLUSIVE PROOF in a question concerning the quality and tendency of Christianity in its first age?

Let now some speculative reasoner come up, and say—"The view that is presented in the New Testament of the moral condition of mankind, and of the doom of the impenitent, and of the agency or interference of evil spirits, cannot but have a pernicious or malign influence over the human mind."—In rebutting any such hypothetical objection we should instantly turn from theory to fact, and reply—If the supposition were indeed well founded, it is certain that the learned zealot of Tarsus must have fully received upon the sensitive surface of his native character any such fanatical excitement, and it is certain too, that a thirty or forty years of injurious treatment would so have aggravated and fixed whatever was bad in his natural temper, that his last letters would verily have reeked with venom. But is it so in fact? Let these letters say. Must we not acknowledge that, how sad and appalling soever may be the truths on the ground of which the Gospel proceeds, or on which it builds its superstructure of mercy—the efficacious motives it brings in upon the human mind are far more than enough to correct

the gloomy influence of those facts, and do actually avail to produce the most perfect examples of gentleness, meekness, and universal goodwill; — aye, and to engender this bland philanthropy even upon an intemperate spirit!

Our evidence on this point has a more extended consequence than may at first appear, and is such as to justify the share of attention now claimed for it.

These valedictory letters (for we may so deem them) in the first place prove, what before we have alleged, that the mildness of the apostle's character, such as it appears in the greater part of his writings, was not the consequence of a prostration of his native vigour, or an enfeebling of that constitutional vivacity which brought him so early upon the stage of public life. The sort of advice he gives to Titus in reference to the factious and dissolute Jews of Crete (as well as similar passages in the epistles to Timothy) makes it certain that the repellent force of his mind remained undiminished.—Paul had not become so easy—much less imbecile, as to wink at disorders, or tamely to allow either the apostolic or the episcopal authority to be sported with.

Yet it was no personal homage that he demanded, such as ambition seeks for.—"I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious"—an eminent example of that mercy which even "the chief of sinners" henceforward may hope to receive. The first point

insisted upon in these pastoral admonitions is, that prayer and praise should be offered in the christian assemblies continually in behalf "of all men," especially "for kings, and all that are in authority. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Is it the religious misanthrope who speaks in this passage?—there is certainly heard in it no growl of the Jewish grudge against the bulk of mankind; nor does it convey the writer's covert revenge against the Roman or Jewish authorities, that had every where loaded him with wrongs. One might, for a moment, fancy that Paul had at length gained access to the imperial saloon—was basking in the sunshine of the court, and thence was issuing mandates to the christian world in the fulness of his complacency. Alas—he was still the tenant of a dungeon! Mark it;—this command to pray for kings and magistrates was sealed by a hand then actually encumbered with the chain of despotic power!

The description given of episcopal qualifications in these letters might be pertinently adduced as proof of the modesty and soundness of the writer's conceptions of spiritual supremacy. To estimate fairly this description we ought to place in comparison with it certain magnific passages that might readily be quoted from even the most moderate of the Fathers. He who, as

we have seen, is neither murky and contumacious towards secular authorities, nor exorbitant and preposterous in his notions of ecclesiastical prerogative, may justly claim a rare praise, inasmuch as the one of these faults, or the other (if not both together) has ordinarily belonged to men who have stood at the head of religious communities in times of persecution.

"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil:—the Lord reward him according to his works;"—an announcement, this, of righteous retribution, and in harmony with the established tone of divinely commissioned men; and necessary to the maintenance of apostolic authority. But we find that the irksome subject is glanced at only, and that an instantaneous transition is made to one which, although painful also, serves to bring into view that rule of discrimination according to which the apostles meted out their censures—"making a difference, and of some having compassion." "At my first answer" (arraignment) says Paul, "no man stood with me; but all forsook me:—Let it not be laid to their charge!"

A criterion of a man's temper might with great safety be drawn from the simple, though not obtrusive, circumstance of the sort of transitions he is accustomed to make in unpremeditated converse with his friends, or in his confidential correspondence. It is in these sudden turns and replications that the inner

texture of the soul is exposed to view. Every one who has been a meditative listener to the familiar talk of mankind, is well aware of the significance of the fact we here refer to. The characteristic of the mind, and of its individual affections, is not so well furnished by what a man says on such or such a topic, deliberately brought before him, as by what he slides into, when the immediate subject is dismissed.—If pride rankle in the bosom—if murky revenge be the master passion—if envy bear rule within the hidden world; or if spiritual arrogance be the yeast that ferments in the soul, we shall readily detect the disguised malady as often as the man makes his transition, or turns off from the question or discourse that has engaged him.

And how, on the other hand, does the benignity—the charitable hope—the kind interpretation of what is ambiguous, break out from the casual converse of a tranquil and happy spirit! Let the sky be never so much darkened, we feel (when in such company) that a summer's sun is somewhere above the horizon; and ere long its power and brightness actually burst out, even from the midst of gloom and thunder.—Now by this very rule, and it is perhaps one of the most constant and certain of any that may be advanced as a clew to the secrets of the human heart, we are content that the writer of the Pauline epistles should be judged, and the quality of his deepest motives, and the

colour of his habitual sentiments be decisively spoken of. We say then that the writings of Paul, abrupt and elliptical as his method often seems, are in a special manner distinguished by a frequent beaming forth of hope and glory, when least one expects it.—He writes like a man who descends to his subject from a higher sphere:—as for example, when, after laying down the rule of behaviour proper to a servile condition, and insisting upon submissiveness and fidelity, he returns, as in a moment, to the very summit of joy. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us," not only the virtues of common life, but that we should "look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Almost immediately we meet with a sudden transition of another sort, indicative of the permanent humility of the writer's mind, as well as of its broad benignity and good-will. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers; but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men.—For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared."—Is not this the natural turn of a mind at once humble, pious, and benevolent?

"This thou knowest (or, knowest thou this?) that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." But does resentment lodge in the writer's mind; or is the subject pursued and morosely grasped? What meet we in the very next verse?—"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."—Some universal axiom of a happy aspect is the ordinary corollary of this writer's incidental advices:—as thus—"Refuse profane and old wives' fables; and exercise thyself rather unto godliness; for bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come ..... We trust in the living God, WHO IS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN, specially of those that believe." "From men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, withdraw thyself; BUT GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; having therefore food and raiment, let us be therewith content." In several instances the most sublime of

all the doxologies which the Scriptures contain are those thrown by Paul into the midst of his discussion of lower subjects. Perhaps, if we were to select the passages in his epistles from which, more signally than from any others, the brightness of the upper world shines out, they would be those that most abruptly turn the current of his discourse. Yet what is this, if we are to lay any stress upon the constant laws of the human mind, but proof that the happiest, the most expansive, and the most elevated sentiments constituted the very substance, or inner body, of the writer's character, so that every rapid transition he makes, and every sudden movement is a revulsion from the sombre to the bright; — or from wrath to mercy; — or from duties to recompences; — in one word, from earth to heaven!

Christianity then, such as we find it in the Scriptures, is benign—it is from Heaven; and even had it utterly vanished or ceased to affect mankind in the same age that saw it appear, the documentary proof of its divine origin would have remained not the less complete and irresistible. In that case—convinced as we must have been that the True Light had once, though but for a moment, glanced upon the earth, we should have looked wistfully upward in hope that the great revolutions of the heavens

would at length bring round a second dawn, and a lasting day.

But it is far otherwise; and in coming to the close of a course that has presented the perversions, not the excellences of Christianity, we should seek relief from the impression made by a long continued contemplation of a single order of objects—and those the most dire.—The Gospel has had multitudes of genuine adherents —Christ a host of followers, in the worst times; or if the first three centuries, or the last three of Christian history, are looked to, it would indicate affectation, or a melancholy and malignant temper, to estimate at a low rate the extent of the true Church.

Yet the terrible fact which, though predicted by the apostles, would have astounded themselves had it stood before them in distinct perspective, remains to sadden our meditations— That an apostasy, dating its commencements from a very early age, spread over the whole area of Christendom, affecting every article of belief, and every rule of duty; and that it held itself entire through much more than a thousand years.

But what is our own position? what stage on the highway of truth has the Protestant community reached? are the reformed churches calmly looking back, as from an elevation, and under the beams of day, upon a dark landscape, far remote, and hardly distinguishable? or should

it not rather be confessed that our reformations though real and immensely important, are initiative only? This is certain that the evolutions of the Divine Providence exhibit seldom or never to the eye of man any hurried transition; but that it renovates and restores by successive impulses, and these at distant intervals. We only follow then the established order of things when we hope that there is yet in reserve for the world the boon of an unsullied Christianity.

The sinister sense in which men of a certain party would snatch at such a supposition, and affirm that even the prime articles of truth have not yet been disengaged from the general apostasy, except by the sceptic few, is peremptorily excluded by the fact of the general and popular diffusion, and devout perusal of the Scriptures. For if, even where universally read and piously studied, the Inspired Books fail to convey to the majority their principal meaning, it is certain that they are better discarded than any longer reverenced as Instruments of religious Instruction. If the Church—take what age we please—has not possessed itself of the vital elements of sacred knowledge while unrestrainedly reading, and while diligently studying the Scriptures, then the labours of those who would tell us so, are idle; for it must be confessed that the pursuit of truth at all on the field of Revelation, is a desperate enterprise.

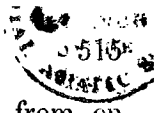
Yet this granted—and it is unquestionable, an attentive and impartial survey of the religious history of mankind leads to the conclusion (and it is on the one hand a consolatory, as well as on the other an afflictive conclusion) that the possession of the vital elements of religion may consist with such perversions, both in theory and sentiment, as deprive Christianity of its visible beauty, and forbid its propagation. Most of the examples adduced in the preceding sections come under the range of this principle; and in presenting always the illustrious and the mitigated instances rather than the exaggerated or the base, the author has steadily held to his purpose of bringing home to every mind the conviction that no degree of piety should be allowed to protect the system under which it appears from the severest scrutiny, or from grave suspicions.

If it be asked on what ground any such suspicion can fairly rest at a time when the characteristics of freedom, vigour, and activity broadly attach to the exterior of religious profession, it may at once be replied that there must be room for serious and unsparing inquiries, so long as the actual products bear a very slender proportion to the means of general instruction — so long as Christianity fails to affect the more energetic portion of the community — so long as zealous endeavours to

propagate the faith abroad, though not altogether unblessed, are followed, after a long trial, with scanty successes;—but especially have we cause to suspect that some fatal and occult misunderstanding of the Gospel exists, while the ecclesiastical condition of the religious commonwealth is in all senses preposterous.

Let it be assumed that each separate article of our creed is well warranted by Scripture; it may notwithstanding be true that indefinite misconceptions, affecting the Divine character and government, or that certain modes of feeling generated in evil days, and still uncorrected, exist, and operate to benumb the impulsive and expansive energies of the Gospel. Our interpretation of Christianity may be good, and may be pure enough for private use;—it may be good in the closet, good as the source of the motives of common life; and good as the ground of hope in death, and yet may be altogether unfit for conquest and triumph. That it is so unfit, should be assumed as the only pious and becoming explication we can give of the almost universal ignorance and irreligion of mankind.

With no very easy sense of the greatness, the difficulty, and the peril of the task to which he puts his trembling and perhaps presumptuous hand, yet from the impulse of a feeling not to be repressed, and with a resolution not to be



daunted, the Author—imploring aid from on High, will ask yet again the attention and the concurrence of those who, like himself—invincibly persuaded of the truth of Christianity, can taste no personal enjoyments, can admit no rest, while it falters on its course through the world.

THE END.

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